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EXCLUSIVE

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GREG'S GANG!

February

2007

DIRTBIKE
RIDER



COMMENT

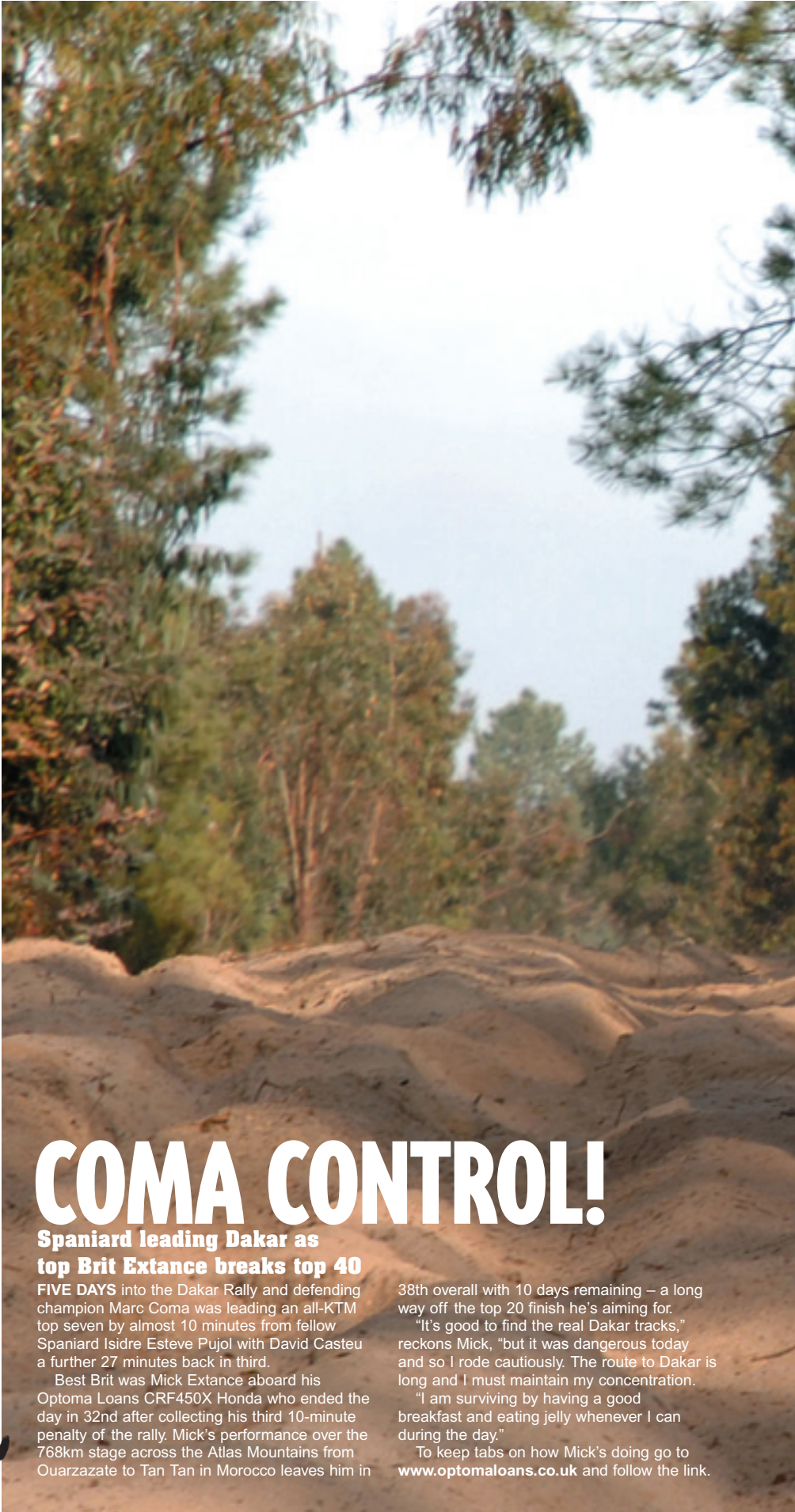
I HATE New Year resolutions! After 362 days (guess how long I stuck to my '06 resolutions) of drinking, smoking, swearing, pie-eating and salad dodging, when January 1 rolled around it was time to stagger up to the bathroom mirror, grip the sink with trembling hands, stare into those bloodshot eyes and admit that the party was over...

Since January 2 (which, as everyone knows, is when all proper resolutions should kick off) I have eaten three pies, liberally peppered my speech on a day-to-day basis with four, five and even six-letter words and consumed booze on all but two days (but only once to memory-wiping excess). And as I write this month's comment it's still only January 11. I haven't, however, had any nicotine whatsoever and if I can only stick to one resolution then that's the one that really counts. And do you know what? Apart from irritability, aggression, depression, anxiety, poor concentration, increased appetite, light-headedness, insomnia and killer cravings it's actually been quite easy so far...

Now there is one resolution that I'd strongly urge all DBR readers to make – and, luckily, it's an incredibly easy one to keep as well... A charming bit of legislation known as the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 has basically closed off thousands of miles of public rights of way to motor vehicles. This has serious implications for trail, trials and enduro riders and is a classic example of how highly-politicised pressure groups like The Ramblers Association are using parliament to squeeze out motorcyclists. But there's still a chance to stop the NERC Act in its tracks by going to <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/reclaimRUPs/> and adding your name to the online petition.

At the moment there are 3,671 signatures on there – not bad but it could be so much better. If just a small fraction of DBR's average monthly audience of 45,000-plus sign then we could possibly make all the difference. And for dirt bike riders across the country that would make for a very happy New Year...

Sean



COMA CONTROL!

Spaniard leading Dakar as top Brit Extance breaks top 40

FIVE DAYS into the Dakar Rally and defending champion Marc Coma was leading an all-KTM top seven by almost 10 minutes from fellow Spaniard Isidre Esteve Pujol with David Casteu a further 27 minutes back in third.

Best Brit was Mick Extance aboard his Optoma Loans CRF450X Honda who ended the day in 32nd after collecting his third 10-minute penalty of the rally. Mick's performance over the 768km stage across the Atlas Mountains from Ouarzazate to Tan Tan in Morocco leaves him in

38th overall with 10 days remaining – a long way off the top 20 finish he's aiming for.

"It's good to find the real Dakar tracks," reckons Mick, "but it was dangerous today and so I rode cautiously. The route to Dakar is long and I must maintain my concentration.

"I am surviving by having a good breakfast and eating jelly whenever I can during the day."

To keep tabs on how Mick's doing go to www.optomaloans.co.uk and follow the link.

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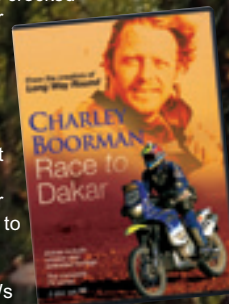
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WIN!WIN!WIN!

Race to Dakar DVDs up for grabs

HE CAME, he saw, he fell off and crocked himself – but at least actor, author and all-round bike nut Charley Boorman had the furry fellas to have a stab at the Dakar Rally in the first place! And, what's more, we've got five copies of the DVD chronicling his ill-fated '06 attempt up for grabs...

To win a copy of Race to Dakar all we want to know is the answer to this very easy question. In 2003 Charley and his best mate went round the world on a pair of BMWs – but what is the name of his bearded Scottish uber-luvvie actor darling pal?



- Is it: A) Ewan McGregor
B) Ewan Ewanofferson
C) Ewan Meoutsidenowsonny
D) Wee sausages in kilts

Think you know the answer? Okay, write it down on the back of a postcard, sealed envelope or vacuum-packed premium Polish pork sausage and send it – along with your name, address and a daytime phone number – to us at Race to Dakar, DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancs LA4 4AG.

Alternatively, hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the competitions link.

The comp closes on February 15 with the first five correct entries drawn at random getting a DVD each.



© J van Oers

Defending champion Marc Coma holds a 10-minute lead after five days of the Dakar

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**Cover: You've got to
admit it, after eight
years away Billy Mack
sure looks good back
in green!
(rayarcher.com)
Contents main image:
He's semi-retired but
RC's still got it...
(Steve Cox)**

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WIN! WIN! WIN!

Hawkstone International tickets

enter online at
dirtbikerider.com
up ↑ ♥

THE HAWKSTONE International is one of the biggest British motocross races in the UK off-road calendar and it's definitely one of the best so come March 4 there's only one place you need to be – Hawkstone Park innit!

And if you're thinking the paltry price of admission is something you'd rather not be paying this year then you can potentially save yourself some spondoolies by entering this free competition to win one of 10 fine pairs of tickets for the pre-season race everyone's talking about.

To get your hands on a fine pair all you have to do is go online to www.dirtbikerider.com, answer the stupidly simple question and then fill in the online entry form. But don't worry if you're a technophobe or simply not hooked up to the world wide web because you can still enter the good old fashioned way.

The question we want you to answer – either online or written on the back of a postcard or sealed down envelope – is this. Which of the following potential obstacles is an infamous part of the Hawkstone Park motocross circuit?

- Is it:
- A) The Hawkstone hill
 - B) The Hawkstone hippo
 - C) The Hawkstone hors d'oeuvre
 - D) The Hawkstone haggis
 - E) The Hawkstone kilted wee sausage
 - F) The Hawkstone hermaphrodite

When you think you know the answer either head to www.dirtbikerider.com, follow the comps link and shake your shizzle online or send it along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number to us at **Hawkstone Hoopla, DBR Magazine, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 4AG.** The first 10 correct entries chosen precariously by Pedro the prize-winner-picker after the closing date of February 15 will win a p-p-pair of tickets.

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© Suttty

BYMX DATES

WITH THE BYMX championship registration deadline of February 1 coming up faster than an angry Billy Mac with a stuck throttle, the ACU's MX committee chairman Roy Humphrey has issued a timely reminder.

Spaces are becoming increasingly limited and, apparently, there are several notable riders and teams who have yet to register. So, er, pull your fingers out...

BYMX champs Dates and venues

April 6/7	Desertmartin, Northern Ireland
April 21/22	Culham, Oxfordshire
May 19/20	Low Gelt, Cumbria
June 9/10	Howton Court, Herefordshire
July 7/8	Talsarn, Wales
July 28/29	Leuchars, Scotland
August 25/26	TBA
October 6/7	Hawkstone Park, Shropshire



KATOOM CAR!

BILLED AS the bridge between bikes and cars, KTM's futuristic-looking X-Bow is all set to be unveiled in March at the Geneva Motor Show. Featuring a four-cylinder Audi engine in a lightweight carbon fibre chassis, the basic model X-Bow should develop around 220bhp with an eye-popping 300bhp special version also in the pipeline. Suspension comes from WP, brakes are by Brembo and – in keeping with the Buck Rogers theme – Dainese are making driving suits containing an integrated entertainment system.

NOISE LIMITS

WITH **NOISE** issues becoming an increasing threat to off-road sport the ACU have announced a new limit for four-strokes – although this won't come into effect until January 1 2008.

For 2007 the limit for two and four-stroke machines will remain at 96db but the thumper limit will drop to 94db at the start of '08. A new lower level will then be introduced in 2010 following regulations expected to be issued by the FIM this April.

To encourage organisers to police sound levels at their meetings, sound meters are available to ACU-affiliated clubs at a special discount price of £110. For more information – and details of ACU sound testing courses – contact Michelle Haynes on 01788 566405.

GORDON CROCKARD

READY, STEADY...

THE PRIDE OF ULSTER'S GOT HIS '07 RIDE SORTED, SPONSORSHIP DEALS INKED AND A COUPLE OF CHRISTMAS DINNERS INSIDE HIM – NOW IT'S TIME TO GO TO WORK

WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD PHOTO BY SUTTYY

WELCOME READERS – 2007 is upon us and it's time to get cracking. Diets everywhere, gym membership overload, great efforts to stop smoking etc etc... Yes, everyone's going to have a great year, train harder, practice all winter, get new deals, new bikes, new gear and win everything in sight! Am I, right? Well, I for one won't bore you with all the usual 'I'm gonna this' and 'I'm gonna that' rubbish as it's all so predictable and gives you that Groundhog Day feeling.

So quickly moving on... December flew by for me, a quick blink and it was gone. Maybe it's just now that I'm a bit older it seems that way. I celebrated my 28th birthday last month so I guess I'm going to have to act like a grown-up now. Some of the duties I've been carrying out certainly make me feel grown up. I've been having to do a lot of personal sponsorship deals and really sell myself as an opportunity for companies to advertise their businesses – it's been going quite well and now everything is almost in place. I can get on with the easy part of the job (that's practising, testing, training, racing).

In the past I've gone to America for pre-season preparations but this year sadly I won't be near the place. I sure am going to miss the excitement of watching the opening SX rounds at Anaheim and San Diego but to be honest it takes a lot of money, time and organising to go Stateside. So instead I'll be doing all my training at home and the weather will determine where I go testing and practising. Just taking it week by week really.

I'm all signed up with PAR Homes Honda and will contest the full MX1 world championship and also the British MX1 championship. I'm going to win them both, you'll see! I'm kidding – but I'm not ruling anything out. Paul Rowlands is my boss and he runs an honest race team. I think we'll have a good year and I wish him the best in managing my racing personality. Good luck!

I'm pumped to be having Steve Clitheroe involved with me again. I had the pleasure of working with him in 2003 and he can provide me with everything I ask of the 450 CRF motor. A very switched on guy in the engine tuning department I reckon. KP Racing Services are refining my Showa A Kit suspension for the '07 series – this is a good direction for me as our communication and understanding of what's required is very strong.

We'll be all decked out in Fly clothing which is right up there with the best of them in terms of style, protection and durability. I can't tell you how pleased I am with securing a deal with them. It's cool gear and I feel proud to wear it as I think image is important when you've got to wear the stuff as much as I do. Okay, I'm starting to get boring beyond belief – not that the remainder of this is going to get exciting but a change of topic is needed...

◆ Myself and 16 mates hit the coast of Donegal a few weeks ago. I lit my faithful CR500 two-stroke up and enjoyed two full days on our annual bog-hopping weekend. All great fun apart from one casualty who dislocated and broke his wrist on the first day – heal up quick Steve. Rob Crawford joined us this year and he was a virgin to the

whole experience. I was amazed he didn't pick up an injury with some of the dance moves I saw him pull in the disco on the Saturday night. Legendary stuff for a trials rider.

As normal I rode the traditional Boxing Day trial on my 315 Montesa. I've rode better I must admit but, saying that, the last time I was on it was Boxing Day 2005. No crashes or machine damage and a great way to work off the turkey. And I needed to as I ended up having two Christmas dinners as I split the day between my own family and my girlfriend Any's family. I'm good for that level of eating anyway as anyone who knows me well enough will also know I eat in case I get hungry as opposed to when I'm hungry.

During the holiday period I also took part in the Dromore Rugby Club's Superstars charity fund-raising night with proceeds going to the flying doctors team who are the essential men and women who provide the medical service at all motorcycling events in Northern Ireland. Somewhere in the region of £3000 was raised. An auction after the games saw many items bought for way below their value so next year I'd like to see less short arms and deep pockets. Thank you to all who did purchase and donate – it does make a difference.

As I write this I'm thinking about the next few days ahead. I'm racing in the Dortmund SX in Germany on Friday/Saturday/Sunday. I've never been but it's been going for years and seems pretty organised. This week I've been practising at Northern Ireland's only indoor track – Dirtworks. I'm riding a CRF 450 and hopefully will get my hands on some of those Euros they've put up for grabs. Top prize in a new Toyota car so I've booked a one-way flight just in case! Obviously, I'm joking – but imagine the pressure to win if I did do that. And the long hitch home if I lost.

I'll let you know how I get on next month and until then, if you want to win in '07 keep on with those one-arm press-ups!





BRITS RIP!

Chatfield in action in Anaheim

WITH THE AMA supercross series becoming ever more popular on a global basis it's attracting riders from right around the globe as well as all over America. At round one of the series held in Anaheim's Angel Stadium two ballsy Brits – Adam Chatfield and Chris Hay – are among the riders entered.

While Hay struggles to get to grips with the track during timed qualifying and fails to make the night show, Chatfield – who's running AMA national #81 thanks to his points-scoring rides in the previous year's Nationals – does much better.

After qualifying directly for the Main Event from heat two, Adam – who's competing in this year's series as a privateer on a Honda CRF250 – finally finishes 14th in the 15-lap final, just ahead of Aussie import Cody Mackie.

Another young British hopeful who's scheduled to appear at Anaheim is Richie Leech who's now a full-time student at MX Heaven in Perris, California. But a pre-event practice crash sees Richie receive some horrific knee and lower-leg injuries which should keep him off a bike and in rehab for 10 months or so.

GO MANIACS!

WITH AN earlier start than last year's August epic, entries are now open for the 2007 Red Bull Romaniacs which runs from June 17-21. This year's race is based in Sibiu – the cultural capital of Europe – and will see competitors taking on an extreme inner-city enduro race before heading out into the Carpathian Mountains for four fantastically challenging days of against the clock off-road action.

For your chance to take part in this very special event in the pro, amateur, hobby, ATV or tourist classes – alongside some of the world's best off-roaders including Cyril Despres and Giovanni Sala – check out www.redbullromaniacs.com then read DBR's pre-event guide to why you should do the Romaniacs in our very next issue.



© Cyrille Barthe

KINKY BOOTS!

IF YOU were one of the cool moto-kids in the late '70s or early '80s you'd have owned – or at least lusted after – a pair of those revolutionary red plastic Scott boots made famous by American Yamaha star Bob 'Hurricane' Hannah. The Scott boots – and the concept of manufacturing plastic motocross boots – kinda disappeared in the mid '80s but their memory lived on in the minds and hearts of motocross fans and historians.

But, like many a fashion faux-pas from that particular era, the Scott boots are back. Launched just after the opening round of the AMA supercross series, a select band of moto-journo's were lucky enough to be invited to the launch of these very futuristic looking Genius boots. Check out the March issue of DBR for a full-on and flat-out look at this exciting new development in the world of MX footwear.



STEPHEN SWORD

GREAT EXPECTATIONS!

AFTER A RATHER ROTTEN 2006, SWORDY'S ALL SET FOR A SUPER-SWEET SEASON IN 2007

WORDS BY STEPHEN SWORD PHOTO BY BERT JAN VAN GOBBLER

I WOULD like to start this column off by wishing everyone a Happy New Year – I hope '07 brings you success, health and happiness. I guess 2006 wasn't the best of years for me so I'm glad to see the back of that and move into '07 with good health and great expectations.

My ankle is getting much stronger now, I'm training every day in and out of the gym so my fitness is beginning to get to a high level. Before getting back on a bike I want to make sure I have good physical condition – I think that will be the key for me and will help me get back stronger for the start of the season.

In two weeks time I start riding and testing with the new team. I'm very much looking forward to the new set-up this year, they have been working really hard over the winter on the bikes and the organisation is very professional. The team has a very good structure which I like and are headed in a good direction for the future.

Normally in January I go to America for three weeks training but this year is an exception. I want to use the time I have here to make sure I don't waste any days – I need to focus and use the time to work hard and will do with the help of Dave Thorpe.

Christmas was filled up seeing lots of friends and family. Once we got the dogs settled with our neighbour we headed off to see Jodie's family on Christmas Eve. We had the usual big Christmas dinner followed by games and lots of drink for Jodie. Boxing Day we drove up to Scotland to spend some time with my family.

We had a nice time just relaxing and visiting people – you know the sort of stuff that goes on at Christmas. After a quiet few days there we headed back to see the New Year in at home – again Jodie consumed lots of booze. I don't blame her though, all those months spent looking after and running around after me while I was injured is enough to drive anyone mad. I think she was also pleased to see the back of '06.

I'd like to take the opportunity now to thank everyone again for all their help and support. It's easy for people to be nice when you're winning but when you have an injury you find out who your real friends are and discover the people who are behind you 100 per cent. Thanks guys!

I popped back to Marshfield to say hi to some of my friends – the first being newly-weds Mark and Emma Hucklebridge. Huck was giving me plenty because I missed the wedding last year because I was having an operation. It's a shame because I was really looking forward to it

and it would have been the one day I'd have got a free meal out of Huck. Don't worry Huck I won't forget that one.

We also popped in to the Church family home. Paula was on hand with her lovely tea and cakes and Tom was filling me in on the testing he's already done while Mike – like me – is just pumped on the new season getting under way.

I haven't really being up to much else apart from training most days. Most weekends I get together with some mates and we watch some football. Thursday night is golf night! Jodie plays netball and I pop down to the driving range to whack a couple of baskets of balls with my neighbour.

One thing which will be cool and I can't wait for him to do it at the end of the day's racing is when Sean – the DBR editor – comes round with his little recorder to ask how the day went. Good or bad I'll just be so pleased to speak to him.

I'm going to sign off now. You may notice I've put #4 next to my name – that's my new number. It's always been lucky for me in the past so let's hope it stays that way.





2007 RANGE NOW IN!

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Next Issue On Sale February 16

Three n' Easy? Carl Nunn lines up his MX2 hat-trick

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Island Life!

Anti-social hours, pish-poor wages, Dickensian working conditions, Beelzebub for a boss – it's not all fun and games being DBR's Deputy Dawg. Good job then that he's occasionally let off his lead, given a quick rabies jab and allowed to go racing in such exotic MX hotspots as Tenerife... And thanks to the passports for pets scheme there's no six-month stay in quarantine on the way back!

Photo by Jason Ecclestone/motocross365.com

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BLARNEY

WORDS BY STEVIE MILLS PHOTO BY SUTTY

BRING IT ON!

THE '06 SEASON'S ONLY JUST ENDED AND ALREADY OUR MAN IN THE EMERALD ISLE IS EAGERLY ANTICIPATING ANOTHER YEAR OF RACING...

BY THE time you get your paws on this month's DBR you may well have noticed that our beloved motocross racing season is indeed fast approaching – although those who were unable to contain their excitement rode in the Mourne club's enduro just outside Newcastle.

A fantastic day's fun was had by everyone who braved both the weather and the natural terrain which included bogland and mountain trails that most goats would have struggled with. Man of the meeting was Philip McLoughlin who took the overall win from enduro expert Adrian Lappin while Stephen Russell rewarded himself with the third place medal.

Okay, time for a few 2007 bits and pieces... Gordon Crockard is just about to press the go button on his preparations to fly the PAR Homes banner in British and world championships. Barty Marr has been working on his tan and surfing skills having resigned for Bike it/Dixon Yamaha, packed his bags, boarded the 'Freedom Bird' and jetted off to California to prepare for his British and GP campaigns. "Oh, if only," sighed Stevie as the wind and rain battered against his small office window (sorry, lost the plot there for a moment)...

On the national circuit the final chimes of musical saddles are just about over which leaves the bums on seats scenario looking something like this...

Defending their Irish and Ulster titles in 2007, the Moto One/Intouch team will see Wayne Garrett take the lead role while teenage pilot Graeme Irwin joins the orange brigade. Young Irwin is no stranger to top-flight competition and has been riding at British championship level throughout his short but well documented career.

RBR Racing will again run multi ex-Ulster champ Tommy 'The Tiger' Merton. Despite several rumours of colour change, Tommy will race Honda 450/250 machinery.

Team GOMX will run Honda/Silkolene/Durographix.com on machinery supplied by Russell's and CCM Motorcycles. The triple Irish MX1 trophy winners are motivated to recapture the national crown in '07. New signing to partner Mike Sinton is southern centre ace Ross Brown whose job will be to concentrate on racing the MX2 series.

Ex GP star Laurence Spence will have his hands full for this coming season with teenagers Luke Wilde and Daniel Matheson flying the LS-Racing colours in MX2. Support will also be forthcoming for Stephen Lewis, Chris Ross and small-wheel 85 rider Jonathan O'Neil.

The younger of the Garrett brothers, Jason, has penned a deal that will see him turn orange and join Andrew O' Brien and Davy Gorman

under the AJ Plumbing big rig. Jason – who won a MX2 Irish championship race at Dundalk last season – has been training hard in preparation for his title challenge with his new team.

Fifth place in the Irish MX1 championship, capped with a personal best result of second place at Dundalk Motopark, helped young Darren Leonard come under the notice of Hilda from TMC Motox. Darren will ride Honda 250 machinery and wear Sinisalo products for the Naas-based internet motocross company.

One of the questions on people's lips this time of year is 'will there be

a GP in Ireland?' – well, one answer to that is 'where would we run one if we had one?' Would it be worth considering putting Ireland forward for a round of the up-and-coming European championship? The gig would not cost a quarter of the money to run, the attendance figures would be the same and some local riders may just show off their talent in a realistic series.

Ireland's only indoor practice facility is pretty busy in these long winter evenings as many title hopefuls are starting to get back into shape for the season ahead. The Dirtworx winter mini SX series is in full swing and the competitiveness is starting to take this new extreme sport to the next level. Factory heads, pimped up suspension and extra grunt seem to be the order of the day.

Maxmx.co.uk/Monstermoto rider James McFerran has been pretty much unbeatable during the first three rounds with the O'Show in his tracks. And world downhill mountain bike ace Ben Reid is on the pace but has suffered from bad starts and the odd trip over the bars.

Well done to Peter and Fiona Bridgestone who, with the help of a dedicated team including Leslie Moore, raised over £3000 for the benefit of Clarke Clinic (children's ward in the Royal Victoria Hospital) and the MCUI Medical teams. Dr Fred McSorley was the man on the microphone and provided humour throughout

BARTY MARR'S BACK WITH YIXON DAMAHA FOR '07



the night's entertainment.

From a tug of war to laps of the Dromore Rugby Club pitch, teams from all disciplines of motorcycling were equally competitive. At the final count it was the road racers lead by Wosley Coulter from Colin Perry's trialsmen with Crockard's Commandos filling the third place slot.

See you all in the gym?

Stevie



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JONTY'S BOX

WORDS AND PHOTO BY JONTY EDMUNDS

TEAM TACTICS!

IT MIGHT BE A NEW SEASON BUT THE CHANCES ARE THINGS WON'T BE THAT MUCH DIFFERENT AT THE TOP OF THE WEC IN '07

NO MATTER what the sport, winners often make winning look easy. And in the World Enduro Championship things are no different. Sure, there were times during '06 when even David Knight, Samuli Aro and Ivan Cervantes were made to work a little harder than they'd have liked to and as a result produced performances that weren't so 'polished'. But on the whole they made their championship winning results look, dare I say it, easy. As a result KTM dominated the '06 WEC series. And that, I predict, isn't about to change any time soon.

But behind every great rider there has to be two things – the support of a great team paired with great machinery. Sure, a rider's talents are ultimately the most important ingredient but without the right support and the right motor, chassis, suspension and tyre package he'll never produce the results he's capable of. Behind David Knight, Samuli Aro and Ivan Cervantes during '06 were the experienced Farioli KTM team and the mighty KTM factory.

For '07 KTM's WEC team will, like all teams, face numerous challenges and have already endured more than their fair share of head scratching. But not 'what the hell did we do to deserve luck like this' head scratching or 'what do we need to do to win' head scratching. No, while many teams have spent the winter months preparing for the coming season, wondering whether their riders and machinery have what it takes to win a world championship title, KTM's primary challenge has been deciding who goes where in '07.

With a squad of six world class riders, three of which who are more than capable of winning a world championship and another as close to a dead cert as is possible, they have two other riders – Marko Tarkkala and Fabien Planet – that aren't too far away from having what it takes to win world titles either. Deciding what riders will compete in which classes is something KTM have thought long and hard about.

You see there are a number of reasons why KTM have been so dominant in recent years in the WEC. No, in fact there are many, many reasons why KTM have been so dominant but one that many overlook is the fact that they have had a clear number one and number two rider in

each class in recent years – just like most successful F1 teams have.

As good as he is Alessandro Belometti was no real threat to Ivan Cervantes' Enduro 1 title hopes in '06. As much potential as French rider Fabien Planet showed in '05 he was never a real threat to Samuli Aro's Enduro 2 championship aspirations last year. And, well, no matter what rider might have been paired with David Knight in the Enduro 3 class they wouldn't have got in the way of the burly Manxman and his plans to claim a second E3 world championship. As a result of a clear – but not overly obvious – one-two rider strategy in each class KTM put no 'in house' pressure on their number one riders, while at the same time giving them often much needed championship support thanks to a strong team-mate.

With Juha Salminen competing in the Enduro 1 class this season the title is as good as KTM's. I'll even go as far as saying he might 'do a Knighter' and remain unbeaten during the whole eight-round series. Pairing Italian Belometti with Salminen makes perfect sense. He won't likely take away points from Salminen – he'd have to beat the flying Finn to do that – but his presence ensures KTM have the best possible chance of getting two riders onto the podium whenever the opportunity presents itself.

With Knighter heading to the US things were always going to be tricky for KTM in '07 as far as deciding what riders would compete in the E2 and E3 classes. Leaving Marko Tarkkala in the E3 class would likely – but not definitely – ensure KTM the E3 title. But it would also mean that reigning E1 and E2 class champions Cervantes and Aro would compete together in the Enduro 2 class. A big no-no. As history has shown in many forms of motorsport, two #1 riders competing in the same class often results in disappointment for the team in question. Deciding where to put what riders for '07 is, for most teams, a no-brainer. For KTM it's something that needs to be considered carefully if they are to continue their winning ways.

KTM's enviable position at the top of the world's most competitive enduro series has meant that the WEC has become a little one-sided in

ALESSANDRO BELOMETTI
WILL BE CAREFULLY
PLACED BY KTM IN '07



recent years. While it's safe, easy and more often than not accurate to name a KTM rider as the rider most likely to win a world championship before the season has begun, KTM's success has a lot more to do with simply spending lots of money and having more official riders than all other teams.

KTM have not only worked hard in developing a solid team structure and great bikes they have also carefully considered their rider/class options. No matter what classes Aro, Cervantes, Planet and Tarkkala compete in this season, KTM's decision won't have been arrived at by chance or without much consideration.

Stopping KTM retaining their E1, E2 and E3 titles is going to be anything but easy for all riders and all teams – but it won't stop them trying. Which is why the '07 WEC is gearing up to be one of the best yet... albeit one in which KTM will most likely once again shine.

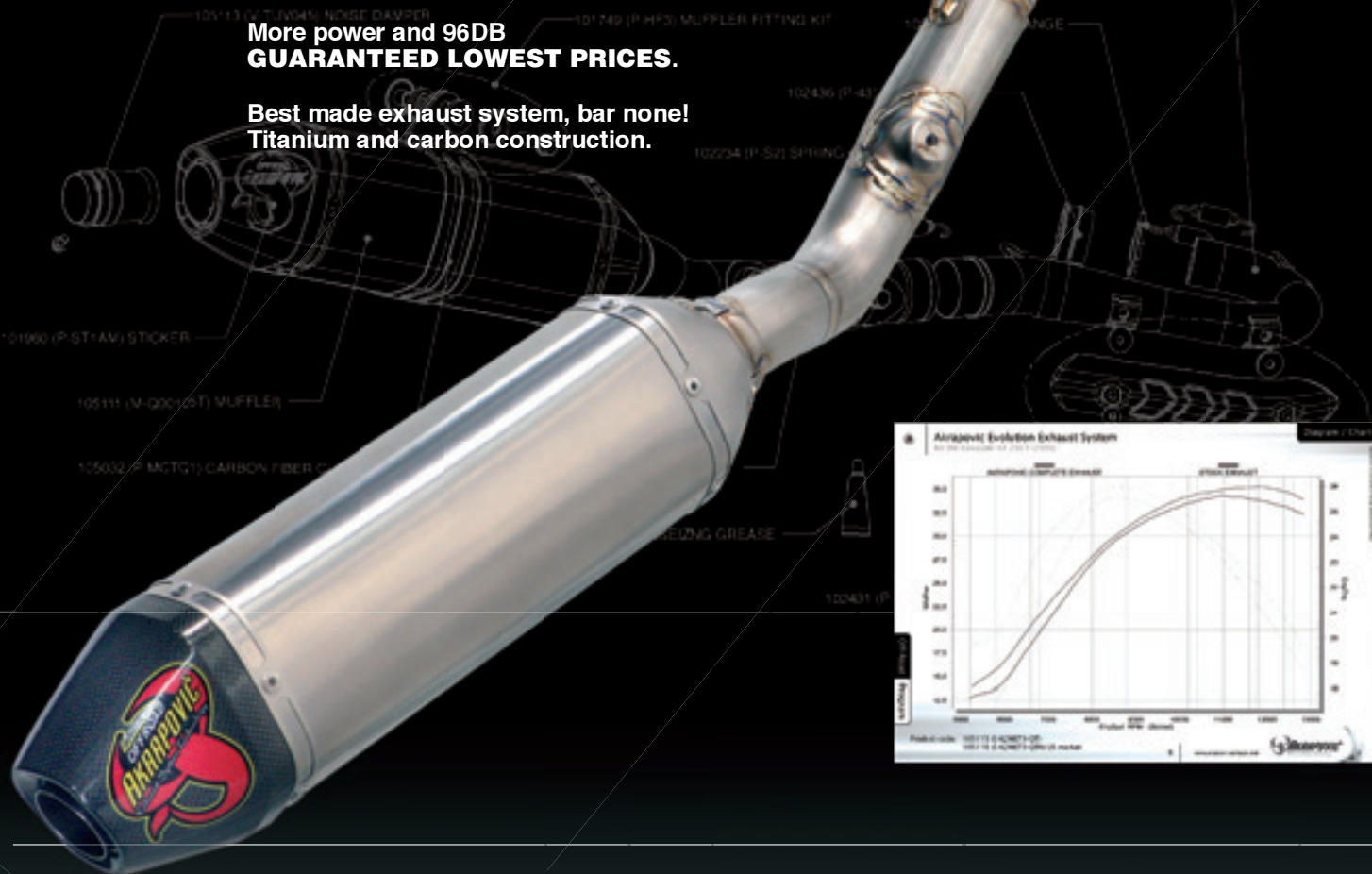


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Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk. All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address. Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

LETTERS WIN PRIZES

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our monthly star prize – which for this month is still a closely guarded secret...



PUMP ACTION!

This is a fuel crisis! A friend and I both went to Morrisons last Sunday to put fuel in the van and get some unleaded in an Acerbis fuel container for the bikes. The woman on the till stopped the pump at £4.18 and ran out shouting "you can't put petrol in that, it's not for fuel"! When I told her 'it is for petrol' she argued with me that it wasn't even after I showed her the writing on the side of it that read petrol container.

After leaving me to go and see the manager she returned only to tell me I could not fill it up because it was American but she would let me buy a jerry can and put the fuel from my petrol container into it. B*****s!

Because I wouldn't do that she made me pour the petrol back into the main pump and as it was raining cats and dogs there's all water in the pumps – poor things. So my question is this – if I were to go back with a typical American car would I be able to fill it up?

Tony, Cheshire

Given your average Yankee car is a bit of a gas guzzler and has to run a bigger tank to compensate the real question is could you afford to fill it up?

Seriously though, we got caught out by the new rules regarding the size of fuel containers earlier in the year. The best solution we can offer to combat this problem is when filling your larger-than-five-litre fuel can without the required special licence keep it hidden in the van. Simple.

POSTER PLEA!

Please, please, please can you make last month's cover shot of Chad Reed into a poster – it's awesome! CR is my favourite rider. I hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year – oh and keep up the good work with the mag!

Gaz, Buxton

You're right, the Chad Reed shot taken by ace US photographer Frank Hoppen would make a very nice poster. We can't promise anything at the moment but we'll see what we can do! If anyone else has any requests for star rider posters then let us know.

LOST IN TRANSIT!

Can you tell me how to get to Mildenhall motocross circuit. I've tried to find it five times now but I always get lost on the way.

Joe, Bristol

It can be a pig to find if you don't know where you're going. Call 01638 718667 for directions.

PEAK PROVIDER?

I'm hoping you can help me out – where did you get the Peak Pro Circuit decals from as I'm after some for my pit bike.

Chris, via email

The graphics are actually imported by Apico – www.apico.co.uk – although we got ours from a company called www.mxgraphics.co.uk in Weston-super-Mare. Give them a call on 01934 429171 and they'll hook you up!

CURIOUS ALLAN

With reference to page 55 of the January issue – which is a great mag as always – where can I obtain some of those there Sunline handguards?

Also do you know of any good custom helmet painters (preferably near Poole)?

Allan, Dorset

For the Sunline handguards you need to contact DSM Offroad on 01792 472000. They're the importers of Sunline, Sixsixone and Arnette products and should be able to point you in the direction of your local dealer.

Helmet painters are a rare breed and off the top of our heads we're struggling to pin-point one in the Poole area. Your best bet is probably giving Lee at D-Zign a call on 01625 427494 or checking out his website at www.dzign-uk.com

FUMBLER FEE?

Due to a fault with the Future West website I had to enter the Sheffield Supercross twice and got charged twice. I can't get a refund despite sending repeated emails, leaving voice mails and even speaking to a Canadian woman at Sheffield who had a list of double payers. Could you ask your readers if they are having the same problems please.

R, via email

If anyone's had a similar problem to this please email in and let us know. We have tried to contact Future West by email but haven't received a response yet either.

CHEERS MA!

I would just like to thank my mum and dad for supporting me all year even when I've had a bad race and also for marshalling all year so thank you.

I would also like to thank all of the paramedics that have helped me this season. Keep up the good work with the magazine – it's a really good read and looks cool.

Callum, Cambridgeshire

FRESH BLOOD!

Well, I've finally gone and done it! After over a year of riding at my local practice tracks and swearing that I'd never mount a bike in anger, I've joined my local MX club, got my ORPA licence and entered my first race which is in April.

When I bought my first proper MX bike in September '05 I swore that racing wasn't for me and I just wanted a bit of fun in the mud but what I didn't realise was that as my confidence and ability grew, so would my competitiveness.

I did a two-and-a-half hour enduro event back in October and the buzz I got on that startline was amazing. I did okay for a racing virgin and managed to finish (this was my semi-realistic objective for the day) and beat 11 others to the flag too.

I still prefer MX to enduro so with my new found stamina I started to think about whether or not I could do 20 mins plus one lap at MX pace. The next time I went practising I managed it and, coupled with a friendly race with someone at similar pace to me, that competitive streak started rearing its head again.

I'm not sure how I'll fare in an MX race but I do know one thing – even if I'm right at the back, I'll be the one with the big grin on his face! I can't wait. I'll be keeping a diary on my website so if anyone's interested they can keep up with how good – or bad – I'm doing at www.doxdesign.co.uk/mx.htm

Love the mag and I hope you all have a cracking 2007!

Tim, the Midlands

Good luck with the races and well done for getting your shameless website related spam printed in DBR!

TRIALS BIKE TOMMY!

I'm 13 years old and I've just received a 1995 Yamaha TY250 for Christmas – it is the best Christmas present ever! I couldn't wait to get out on it and it's the best feeling ever when I'm on it. I want to be just like Dougie Lampkin when I grow up.

I would also like to thank you all at DBR for producing such a great magazine. I've been reading it for two years and it encouraged me to get a trials bike of my own.

Tom, via email

We're glad we helped you catch the dirt biking bug and we'll tell Dougie to look out because you're coming to steal the title of Britain's best ever trials rider. Good luck with it and don't forget to stay feet up!



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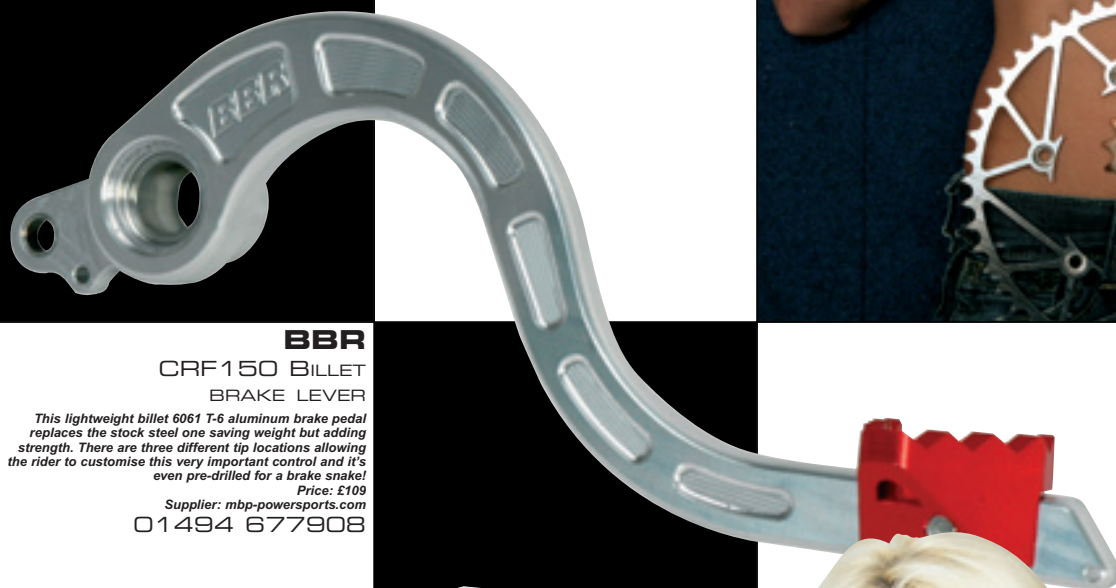
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Price: £109

Supplier: mbp-powersports.com

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This little product might not look like much but the Technon Easy Throttle is a well designed and engineered device that keeps your throttle tube running smooth at the end of your handlebar.

The outer part of the Easy Throttle fixes to the end of your stock plastic throttle tube while the inner part – which features a roller bearing – slots into the end of your bar. When you refit your throttle-tube the peg is held in a perfectly central position offering you a silky-smooth feeling throttle action.

Dealers wishing to stock the Easy Throttle – or people seeking more information about this wonderful little product – are urged to give Woody Woodsworth a ring right now (as long as right now is during office hours).

Price: £24.95

Supplier: AMW Corsham Ltd

01249 714609



DIRT TRICKS

IRONMAN SPROCKETS

If we told you there's a sprocket company who are so sure their range of rear sprockets are tough enough to last for an entire year of off-road abuse they'll guarantee them against excess wear you'd probably tell us to stop talking trips. But, as foolish as it may seem, Poweredfun dot com – the company that brought us the Big Bang Hour Meter – are doing just that with their freshly imported range of Ironman sprockets.

Ironman rear sprockets are made from heat treated, nickel/chrome plated, chrome-moly steel that is claimed to be two-and-a-half times stronger than stainless steel and three times stronger than 7075 aluminium. And they're also claimed to be less than 33 per cent heavier than your average ally sprocket which surely makes them a must for 450 four-stroke pilots or anyone on a budget.

Price: £37.50

Supplier: poweredfun.com

01306 889911



THOR RACING

QUADRANT ROOST GUARD AND HERO GOGGLE

Unless you've had your head up your – or somebody else's – Aris for the last few years you're sure to have heard of the Crazy Frog or the Annoying Thing as it's also lovingly known. Ooop naaaarth in the DBR dungeon we have our own 'annoying thing' – we call her Tiffnoire Leigh.

On the odd occasion that we let Tiffnoire out from her shackles we feel the need to properly protect her from flying insults and other debris with these oh-so fine Thor products – the Quadrant roost guard and Hero goggle. You may remember we've already featured the Ixan-lensed Heros before when Hector the Halloween Tangerine stepped into Tiff's shoes and did that month's modelling – thank you Hector. But the Quadrant roost guard is an all-new product to Stuff which is DBR's monthly two pages devoted to products that are new, so we shall tell ye more.

The Quadrant is an injection-molded plastic roost protector that's been designed with purely motocross in mind and it's certainly up to the task of protecting your body while not being too constrictive or too pricey.

Price: Quadrant Roost Guard £54.99

Hero Goggle £44.99

Supplier: ultimatepursuits.co.uk



ALPINESTARS CHARGER RACEWEAR

Check out this quality racekit from Europe's #1 boot manufacturer Alpinestars. The '07 charger range is designed to function phenomenally – try saying that with a trap full of tapioca – in the rough and rugged world of motocross and enduro.

Price: Pants £119.95

Jersey £29.95

Supplier: alpinestars.com

CI SPORT

01372 378000



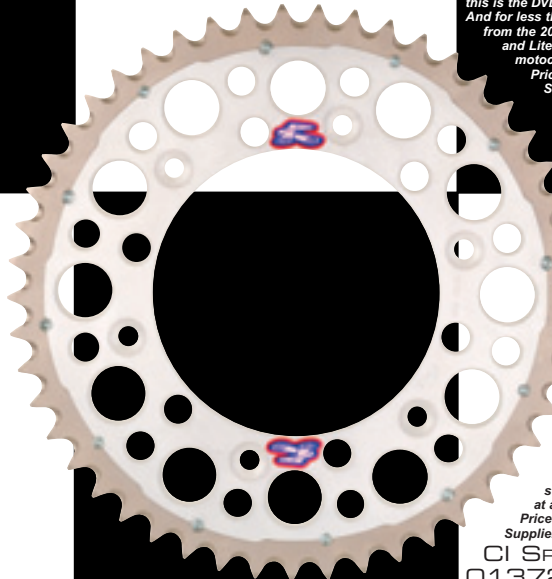
DUKE VIDEO AMA MOTOCROSS 2006 DVD

If you've ever wanted to see Ricky Carmichael and James Stewart going at it like a pair of madmen outdoors then this is the DVD you need to splash out on. And for less than 20 quid you get all the intense action from the 2006 AMA Nationals in both the Motocross and Lites classes making this DVD a must for the motocross loving masses.

Price: £19.95

Supplier: mx1.co.uk

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RENTHAL TWINRING SPROCKET

More super-strength sprocket action – this time from the world's most successful sprocket and handlebar producer Renthal! With 130 world and 90 US titles amassed so far you'd think Renthal would knock it back a notch and rest on their laurels but not a chance – they keep on knocking out new ideas and awesomely engineered new products.

Speaking of which take a look at this TwinRing sprocket which features all the lightweight goodness of an aluminium sprocket body with the beefy strength of steel teeth! The TwinRing should be available at a Renthal dealer near you now!

Price: £49.99

Supplier: renthal.com

CI SPORT
01372 378000

FOX RACING F3 BOOTS

Developed and tested for 18 months by James Stewart, Fox's new F3 boot is an evolution of the Forma Pro. Many people already claim this is the best bootless boot on the market and we can't really disagree – check out the F3 at a Fox dealer near you.

Price: £199.99

Supplier: foxeurope.com

0191 487 6100



FOX RACING V3 ENCORE HELMET

Fox helmets have been a firm favourite with the DBR test-team for a few years now as the protection and levels of comfort they offer are second-to-none. For '07 the V3 is even lighter than previous models and with a vast new range of designs and colour schemes maybe now's the time you go try and buy a V3 of your own.

Price: £224.95

Supplier: foxeurope.com

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KING KIWI?

After a shoulder injury wrecked his '06 season, New Zealand's Josh Coppins is fighting fit, fully focussed and armed with the Rinaldi Yamaha ride vacated by 10-time world champ Stefan Everts. So, could '07 finally be Lizzard's year?

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds





IT DOESN'T take a genius to work out that finishing seventh in the '06 MX1 world championship wasn't what Kiwi Josh Everts worked so hard for prior to the start of his 11th season of MXGP racing. As a pre-season MX1 title contender Josh had one clear goal – to try and win the '06 MX1 world title and in doing so claim his first world crown.

But just two days before the first GP of the year Josh's title aspirations ended when he dislocated his shoulder in his final pre-MXGP practice session. After months of hard work, countless hours readying himself both physically and mentally for what was going to be his most demanding GP season to date and without even crashing, Josh's MX1 campaign was over before it began.

"Through the middle part of '05 I was really challenging Stefan," explains Josh. "He wasn't dominating at all. I felt that if I could up my game a little bit during the off-season I could challenge him. My goal for '06 was simple – I wanted to try and win the MX1 world title."

That, as everyone now knows, didn't happen. Stefan Everts, having seen his three expected closest championship rivals – Josh plus Frenchmen Michael Pichon and Seb Tortelli – fall by the wayside with injuries marched on to his 10th world title. For Josh it was another year that could have been as shoulder surgery was followed by a rigorous rehabilitation and training programme and many weeks away from the GP scene.

"I'd worked hard during the winter and felt good. I was ready for the world championship," comments Josh with real conviction. "Then two days before the first GP, during my last day of practising, I dislocated my shoulder. I couldn't believe it. I was kind of in denial at first because it dislocated without even crashing. I kept telling myself that it would be okay but it wasn't. The hardest thing to accept was that I'd worked so hard to be ready for the first GP. I didn't even crash – it was due to an existing injury I didn't know I had."

With the opening GP of the '06 season

literally just hours away Josh was faced with two options – go under the surgeon's knife and have the injury repaired or hope for the best and try and compete while the injury healed itself naturally. Josh decided to go ahead and have the operation.

"I wasn't prepared to make up the numbers as I knew I was good enough to race against Stefan so I went ahead and had the operation which thankfully was successful. I was told that there was a 60 per cent chance that without surgery, trying to let it heal naturally while still racing, it would continue to give me problems. I had to have the surgery."

Left wondering 'what if' of the season he'd hoped would deliver so much, Josh watched closely as Everts began clocking up GP win after GP win after GP win. Disappointed, frustrated yet focused wholeheartedly on getting himself fit ready for his return to the GP scene, Josh looked on from the sidelines as Everts entered the history books as the greatest world championship motocross rider of all time. ►

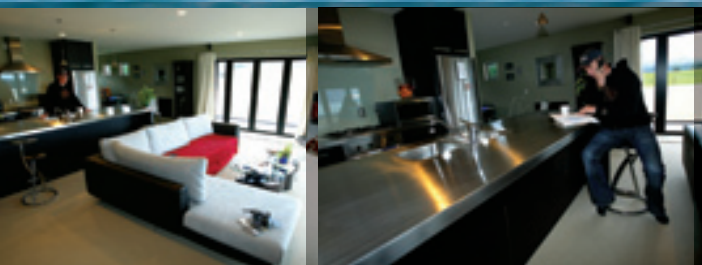


When he's not racing, Josh is a big fan of watersports



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With the '07 season looming, Josh knows he needs to be fighting fit



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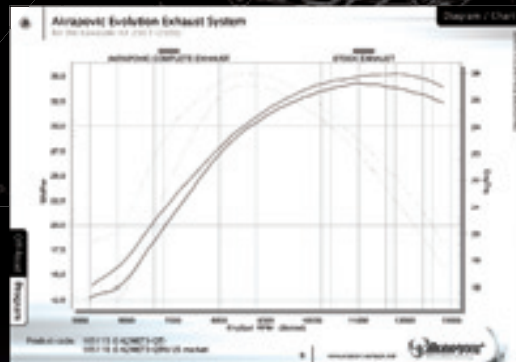


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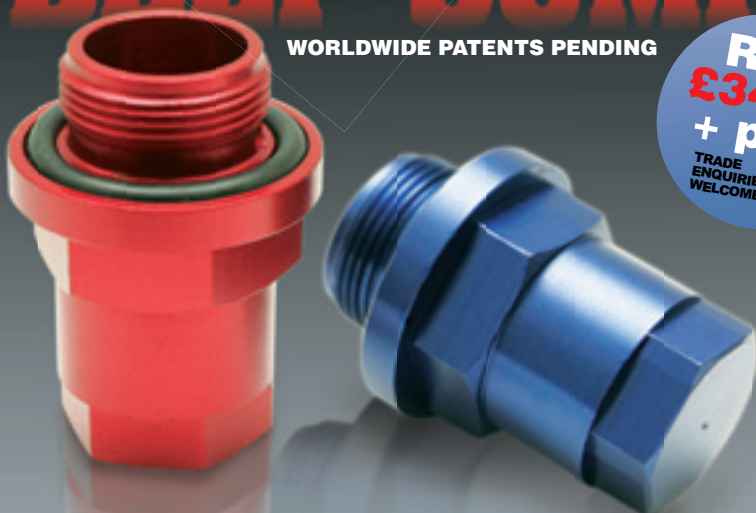
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NZ MX scene - who's up next?

"The sport of motocross is definitely getting bigger in New Zealand," reckons Josh. "It's now cool to have a motocross bike, cool to be down the pub telling your mates you've been out riding and to tell girls that you're a dirt bike rider. There's more outside sponsorship too. Ben Townley and I are getting recognised more so it's all going in the right direction. Motorcycling New Zealand has a new CEO who seems to be on side and is doing some really good things for the sport. Everything seems to be heading in the right direction. "There are a few young kids coming through in New Zealand but the scary thing for me is that the New Zealand championship has just finished and it was the King brothers that won everything," explains Josh. "Ten years ago they couldn't win in New Zealand because Ben Townley, Darryl Hurley and myself were beating them. Darryl and Shayne King were coming

back from Europe, riding their factory bikes and weren't able to win races. Now they're 10 years older, on production bikes and winning races and championships. "To me the young guys aren't really doing what they should be doing, which is winning races. Darryl is 38 now I think and has just won two classes in the New Zealand motocross series. That's not really acceptable – the younger riders should be doing better. "They should be hungrier, fitter and faster. But having said that we do have some good riders coming though. Brad Groombridge is showing some real promise and is just 16. "It's a little bit easy for them to go over and race in Australia and stay there rather than coming onto Europe. Now that racing in Australia is paying what to them is good money many of them aren't looking at the bigger picture."

"Stefan's '06 season was exceptional, incredible actually," acknowledges Josh without hesitation. "He was more focused and determined than ever and winning his 10th world championship, well, it speaks for itself.

"Being able to watch Stefan this season was really interesting. In so many of the races there seemed to be 29 riders that wanted to do as well as they could but Stefan would always have a plan. Even if he wasn't the best on the day he would find his rhythm, ride within his limits, not panic and more often than not after 25 minutes he'd have broken the other guys. Not panicking, watching the riders ahead of him and taking his time was the key to much of Stefan's success. I've now learned that from watching Stefan.

"For me the most impressive thing isn't so much his outright speed at certain events but that he was able to sustain his winning streak for so long, for a whole championship, apart from one race."

That one race Stefan didn't win, the GP of Ireland, was to become the highlight of Josh's '06 season as he beat the MXGP GOAT racing fair and square. With his shoulder surgery a success and having ploughed all his efforts into his rehabilitation programme with his customary gritty resolve, Josh not only returned from injury but returned from injury to finish on the podium at the British GP.

"I didn't expect to come back from my injury so strong so quickly," admits Josh thinking back to the day he finally got to start his '06 MXGP campaign. "I rode my bike 12 times in 16 days before going to my first GP of the year and finished on the podium. Just being fit enough to do two 40-minute motos after doing 12 days of riding was pretty amazing. Being competitive enough to finish on the podium was something I was really pleased with.

"I always worked towards coming back and beating Stefan, I thought I could do it twice before the end of the season but to beat him in Ireland was great. Everything just came together for me there and considering it's a sandy track I was made up to have won and beaten Stefan."

Pleased that he had beaten Everts and returned to the top step of a world championship podium, victory was shrouded in disappointment for Josh who knew there and then that '06 could have been very different had it not been for his injury. But having stayed focused while on his road to recovery and his return to racing, Josh was able to take some good from his weeks away from racing.

"The one good thing to come from my injury was the fact that after 12 days on a bike I





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was able to get on a podium. I'm a lot more confident in my abilities now. I know that I can win with less effort than I thought I needed to put in. It showed me that in some seasons I've possibly worked too hard too early and tried to be too strong too soon. For '07 I'm going to try and pace myself a bit more and not come out all guns blazing at the first GP. Stefan has always built his speed during the first half of the season, that's what I'm planning on doing in '07."

Despite only collecting one GP victory in '06, that's enough for many MXGP pundits to proclaim that Coppins – by virtue of the fact that he was the only rider to beat Everts and held a commanding grip over the rest of his rivals in the races in which he competed – will succeed Stefan in '07 and win the MX1 world title.

"No world championship is easy to win," comments Josh with a wry smile, "I should know, I've failed to win one yet and I've been trying for a while. Yeah, a lot of journalists are saying that it's a done deal, that I'll win the MX1 championship next year but it's not as simple as that. I know that if I work hard and don't get injured again then on paper I am the rider that has the best chance of winning. And of course winning the championship is exactly what I want to do. It is nice to know that I'm the rider many people think will win but, like I said, winning is never easy."

While Josh openly lists consistency, giving

his rivals the credit and respect they deserve, remaining injury free, making no stupid mistakes and staying 100 per cent focused as being key to winning the '07 MX1 title, he will also be competing for the Rinaldi Yamaha team – the same team that carried Stefan Everts during the final years of his remarkable career.

"The big thing for me was the bike," comments Josh when asked why he decided to leave CAS Honda in favour of Rinaldi Yamaha. "Ever since I first came to Europe I have always wanted to race for Rinaldi Yamaha, I always saw their set-up as being incredibly professional.

"The fact that there was more budget, more factory support and parts, more staff, more technical know-how and the fact that I was able to mix up my other deals a bit more, like doing my own clothing deal, all helped too.

"It wasn't that there was any one thing that I was unhappy with at CAS Honda or any one thing that really stood out at Rinaldi Yamaha. There were just lots of little things in all areas that I felt were better so I decided to switch. The whole deal stacked up to be a little bit better everywhere."

While blue will replace red for the next two seasons and Thor apparel will cover his slight but athletic frame, Josh will make no other changes ahead of what is unquestionably his most important season ever as a professional motocross racer.

"Obviously I'll be riding a different bike for a

different team and will have some new sponsors but everything else will remain the same," Josh points out. "I will live in the same house in Belgium, I'll be working with the same trainer, I'm still going to be working with Jacky Vimond on my riding, my motorhome driver will be the same and if I do a national championship it will probably be the Belgian series – I'm basically trying to keep as much as I can the same as in '06. I will spend more time in Italy to stay in close contact to the team but I had a good programme in '06 so I want to keep it the same for '07."

With his programme the same, armed with proven MX1 title-winning machinery and as focused as ever, Josh is again working towards becoming New Zealand's first ever MX1 world champion.

"There are a number of riders that I will have to watch but I'm not expecting to have to watch the same rider for all 15 or 16 rounds," reckons Josh. "De Reuver will be fast at certain races, Barragan works hard as does Philippaerts. I guess on paper Ramon is the guy to watch but you just don't know with him. Stribos should also be good as should Leok. All those guys will be hard to beat at times."

But so will Josh. A rider known to be one of the hardest working competitors on the MXGP circuit, the likeable Kiwi once again has his sights set on one thing. "I want to try and win the MX1 world title, just like I did at the start of '06."



GREEN N' MEAN!

After eight years with Yamaha, Billy MacKenzie – the former bad boy of British MX – is all grown up, back with Kawasaki and setting his sights on the biggest prize in world MX...

Words and photos by rayarcher.com





Billy's undergone a complete makeover for 2007 with a new team, new bike and new clothing sponsor – what hasn't changed is the trademark #211 and a serious will to win

AFTER MAKING his name in the schoolie ranks racing for Team Green, Billy MacKenzie turned pro, signed for Yamaha and embarked on eight controversial years in blue that saw him win GPs, lose titles and make both friends and enemies along the way. Ray Archer caught up with Billy at a secret seaside location for our exclusive photo session and to find out how life's treating the newly-signed factory Kawasaki rider...

DBR: You started your schoolboy career with Kawasaki and raced with them until you turned professional and went to Yamaha – so going back to Kawasaki must be like going home?

BM: "Totally. I had a decision to make as to whether to choose Honda or Kawasaki and it came down to the fact that I have known the guys there for a long time."

DBR: Do you feel that your move to the MX1 class was long overdue?

BM: "A lot of people have said that to me. The MX1 class is a lot better paid as it gets much more exposure on TV and in the media generally but I couldn't leave the MX2 class until I had given it a good shot and I feel that I have done that in 2006."

DBR: At Dixon Yamaha you have always been regarded as the second rider – the rookie, the apprentice, the back-up guy... Is it time now to be the kingpin and could that have happened at Dixon?

BM: "I think my time at Yamaha has helped us both. There were times when I was leading the team, I wasn't always regarded as the second rider. Steve did have a very good set-up so it was a well-served apprenticeship during the eight years we worked together. There are always things that could be better in any team but I was often allowed to do my own thing and try to set up the bike how I wanted to ride it."

"Steve took a lot on last year, he wanted to try his hand at promoting races as well as running the team but I don't think he made the big handful of money that he expected and as a result the team was affected by his actions. Steve was happy for me to move on, more happy to see me sign for someone like Jan De Groot who can refine my riding and take me to

the next level. Equally, I was happy to see Steve resign Carl Nunn, they have worked well together in the past. Carl comes with a couple of British championship titles and a good chance of winning again which is something that I haven't been able to bring to the team."

DBR: Your move to a factory team was not unexpected. What were the major reasons for choosing Kawasaki instead of your other options?

BM: "There were so many reasons to go back to Kawasaki and I was racking my brain when I was deciding on the pros and cons of both deals. One was better financially than the other, I had seen all the bikes in competition but I still felt in my heart that the Kawasaki was better for me. I looked back at some older photographs of me on a Kawa but I just couldn't picture myself riding a Honda for some reason."

"I had two great deals but I knew Steve Guttridge from old. If anything the Honda deal had a lot more trimming on the cake but I went with my heart. With Kawasaki there is direct factory influence, feedback and support – those direct links with Japan are very important to me. When you take a look back at Jan De Groot's CV he has had a few world champions out of his team and I am genuinely looking forward to getting on a green bike."

DBR: What was your initial impression when you tested Stewart's bike against Leok's bike in Japan?

BM: "I wasn't that impressed if I am honest. The bikes were very smooth but I wanted something with different power – when we got back a few days later we went testing in Germany and the bike was different, basically everything I had asked for was there and it was unbelievable. I couldn't believe just how much difference they could and had made to the bike in such a short time."

"We spent three days testing and by the third day I was really feeling part of the bike – it's a lot bigger and wider than my Yamaha, it just fits me great because of my size. When I first rode it I thought it might still need more power because it was so smooth but after riding it I was happy, the changes they had made meant they had listened to me and we were already



Looking mean and lean in green...



working as a team. I knew then that I had made the right decision about my future."

DBR: What were your initial impressions of Jan De Groot and the factory Kawasaki set-up?

BM: "I think my first impression of Jan was that I was intimidated by him. Because I had been with Dixon for so many years I hadn't talked to Jan or any other of the big team managers and bosses – not because I am rude or arrogant, I just don't know them and no-one was going to introduce us. If they noticed me great, if not I

don't go out of my way to make friends at the races.

"When all these offers started kicking in I started to open my eyes and pay a little more attention to what their set-up was like. I looked at the bikes and thought 'wow, I could be riding this thing' – before I had never given it a thought. It opened my eyes.

"Jan is a very quiet guy, he's not a man of many words and I didn't know how to approach him once we started working together but now I realize he's quite a funny guy and I have a lot of

respect for him. I was watching him in Japan, I was overwhelmed at how many mechanics I had working for me on my bike. I stood back and watched Jan – he didn't say much, just looked at everything, taking mental notes and always switching from one thing to another. That's when I thought 'this guy's pretty clued up'."

DBR: Jan always gives 100 per cent and that the Kawasaki factory gives 100 per cent, are you ready to give 100 per cent?

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BM: "I am really excited to be looking different, feeling different, riding something different. I needed a new image. I am really happy with everything that Dixon, Yamaha and Fox have put into me over the years but there comes a time when you need a new look – this is that time!"

"I went to Kawasaki feeling overwhelmed and intimidated at the same time and I came back thinking I could win a world title – the amount of effort they were putting in was amazing and the end result is that the bike is perfect. When you look at the team from a distance everyone is working, they are all focused on the job they are doing. They are totally focused on winning the world title."

DBR: Can you now see the confidence and motivation that Jan De Groot gave to Stephen Sword when he joined the team?

BM: "I wasn't really watching Sword at the time – like I said earlier I was in my own little Yamaha world – but I am sure that Jan and Kawasaki gave Swordy some extra confidence. Because it's Team Green and not Honda I think the pressure is more relaxed as with Honda Japan they have a higher profile – they think they are big guns and with that maybe comes some arrogance. I don't know if that's true but that's the impression I get because when you look back they are still bigger than say McGrath or Carmichael or even Rossi for that matter and that all gives pressure to a rider whereas with Kawasaki they have simply embraced me, made me part of the family and it does feel that they are all working for you to succeed."

DBR: In 2006 you have had some high points and some very low points. How have injuries affected you mentally?

BM: "Leading up to Japan in 2006 I was getting better and better every week. Then we came to Japan where I won the previous year. I won – that was honestly what I was expecting and it happened – but then the following week it all turned sour. My confidence was there, I was expecting to do battle and look to both the world and British titles but I hit a post and broke my hand."

"The adrenalin got me through that day and I did quite well but I could tell my hand was badly broken, it was swelling up in my glove and I couldn't feel it. I had three or four really horrible weeks where I was trying to ride places like Bulgaria with hard landings. I was okay for 20 minutes then my hand would just give in and I couldn't hold on. I was pleased that someone like Jan was noticing that I was at least trying to ride, many other riders would have just given up and said 'see you in a month or so when it's healed'."

"I had been fifth in the world championship – I needed to keep going and try to salvage some points each week. I went to every consultant and I shouldn't have been riding but in my eyes I needed to – the worst that could happen is that it might take a week or two longer to heal but at least I was fighting for points even if it was against pain."

DBR: Jan De Groot's team is based in Holland. Was there any pressure for you to skip the British championship in favour of the Dutch series?

BM: "Steve Guttridge was very keen for me to do the British championship even though my contract is for the world championship. All my fanbase is here, it means some extra income for me and our national series I feel is very strong – you only have to look at the riders

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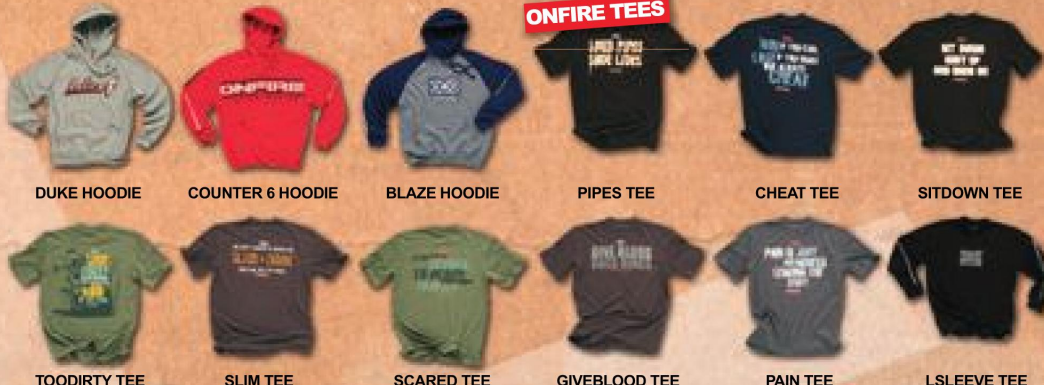
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competing. I am unsure where I am going to base myself but for sure I would like to win a British championship – I have been trying hard for the MX2 so why not aim higher and go for the MX1?

"We have a lot of nice tracks in the UK and I enjoy racing here where I have established myself. I am now living back in Scotland having rented out my house in the south – I normally come home anyway in the off-season so there's nothing new there."

DBR: What's been your training routine in recent weeks?

BM: "I have been in the gym or cycling with my buddies and only riding once a week or so – we have some nice tracks in Scotland but it's no ball-ache to come south to ride in England if we have a day's notice of nice weather."

DBR: What about the next few weeks?

BM: "Before we go riding, testing and to the pre-season races in Italy and France I will spend two weeks with my trainer Willie Linden in Belgium in the sand. It will be physical and more integrated with training and riding so that I don't get too tired."

"January will be full of riding and training before heading to Italy in February for the

serious work of testing. We have a few international races before Hawkstone Park in early March leading up to the British and world rounds."

DBR: With Stefan Everts now retired many people are betting that Josh Coppins will be the next world championship – can you spoil that for him?

BM: "The championship will be a free for all with all those intimidated by Everts now feeling they have a chance to win. For me it's nice to be on a real factory team and stand as a very serious threat for the title. Since 2004 I have always been looking at beating Josh. I am not even looking at Josh as the main competitor – I think everyone will be strong whether they be Strijbos, Ramon or my new team-mate Leok. With the training I am doing I don't really worry about anyone else, let's see who is doing what in the international races and take it from there."

"I am focused on my work and haven't thought about Josh. I will be looking just to finish on the podium as many times as possible, maybe even win a couple and bring some consistency into my riding. Those are my genuine thoughts and that is what Kawasaki is expecting of me. I can't say anymore than that."

Mr MacWhippy...



STORM TROOPER!

Is the 2007 YZF 250 Yamaha's best MX2 missile yet? We pick the foulest day of the year so far to find out...

Words by Sully and Tony Marshall Photos by Sully



*Not the best of places to
be taking a breather Tony...*



BEING ORIGINAL can never be a bad thing – take Yamaha and their 250 four-stroke motocross bike for instance. The YZF250 was the first four-stroke MX2-class missile to be launched to the unsuspecting motocross market in 2001 and it wasn't until '04 that Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki joined the race.

And while owners of the two new 250F models – the Kawasaki and Suzuki models were actually the same bike but in different colours – suffered teething problems including overheating and what was perceived to be premature valve failure, the Yamaha was a rock solid performer that outshone its competition.

But proving that motocross riders can be a fickle bunch, by the end of '05 the YZF – which was still a top-of-the-class performer – was deemed to be too long in the tooth, somewhat outdated and a little bit uncool! Luckily, Yamaha were once again one step ahead and the company that had re-vamped their two-stroke range with ally frames for '05 followed suit with their four-bangers in '06.

The zero-six YZF's certainly looked the part with their fresh frames and brand-new bodywork and initial tests led us to believe the YZF250 was a vastly improved bike over its predecessor. But as the season wore-on and tracks dried out it soon became apparent that the '06 model didn't like to turn half as well on hard, flat turns as earlier models did.

And there were other potential problems too as a possible valve issue meant Yamaha's customers were written to and bikes had to be returned to dealers for a free check and re-fit if necessary. The good news is the '07 models come with different valves and the changes don't end there.



The '07 bike doesn't look radically different from the '06 model – yeah there are the bold new graphics, wavy disks and Pro Taper handlebars that replace the Renthals but aside from that you'd be hard pressed to spot any change.

But the '07 is different! For starters the '07 bike's been on a bit of a diet and the Yamaha technicians have delivered a baby that's 0.7kg lighter than the '06 version. Some of the weight is lost thanks to the use of magnesium

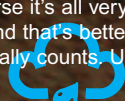
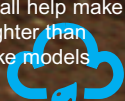
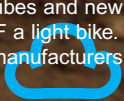
crankcase covers and a new smaller oil tank reduces engine oil capacity by 100ml which saves a little more. Even the engine guards are lighter.

The rest of the weight is saved in the chassis and running gear departments – a new more compact front brake, lighter wavy brake discs, a lighter rear shock, lightweight front fork outer tubes and new triple clamps all help make the YZF a light bike. How light? Lighter than some manufacturers' 125 two-stroke models

and only 700gm heavier than the lightest four-stroke in the MX2 class – Suzuki's RM-Z!

And it's not just weight saving that the Yamaha technicians have worked on as the engine is modified too. New jetting as well as optimised intake, exhaust and ignition settings – whatever that means – are claimed to both clean up the running and produce more ponies.

Of course it's all very well claiming that this is better and that's better but it's on the track where it really counts. Unlike most new bike



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tests which are carried out over the duration of a single day at one track, our tenacious tester – tiny Tony t'Marshall – had three weeks to fully put the '07 YZF through its paces on a variety of tracks, both hardpack and sand, over the Christmas period.

But despite Britain enjoying mostly dry weather over the festive season the one day we pencil in to drive five hours to shoot Tony and the YZF in action it decides to rain. In fact it rains so hard our chosen Johnny Douglas Hamilton-built track not only floods but the driving rain kills a pair of Canon camera bodies – and our photographer's will to live – before the day's done. Bugger!

So with excuse for crap pictures made it's time to hand things over to Tony – go to it tiger!

"The first thing I noticed when I sat on the bike is that it feels high. Suttly tells me the YZF has one of the tallest seats of all this year's bikes and to me when I'm on the YZF it feels like I'm sitting on a wall because the seat feels so flat and square. I'm not sure if it's the height of the seat which makes the bars feel low or if the Pro Tapers are a low-bend bar – either way I'd prefer something a little bit higher on there.

"Also when sitting on the bike in the pits I thought it felt quite heavy – one of my friends described it as feeling like a lump when he sat on it. Luckily, out on the track that feeling of heaviness is forgotten and the YZF is a bike that handles well with the suspension feeling very well balanced.

"That feeling of balance is lost in fast bermed corners though and to me it feels like either the front is too low or the rear is sitting too high. To combat this feeling I found sitting a little bit further back on the seat through the

turns helped things feel much better. That's the only place I can fault the handling of the bike as generally it's spot on.

"Yamaha 250Fs are known for having strong motors but the '07 we tested has a couple of flaws. The first was the jetting – the motor runs clean from the bottom but goes fluffy in the middle. When you clear that fluffy stage it cleans up again but the power tailed off at the top-end. I really can't decide if it's running too lean or too rich.

"What I've learnt from talking to other owners of '07 YZFs is that once the jetting is sorted it's a much improved motor over the '06 model – plenty fast and with improved over-rev.

"The other problem I encountered was shifting gear from third to fourth – it just doesn't want to do it under load. This is possibly because the bike's barely run in and it might get better with time but as it stands at the moment unless you flick the clutch in or let the gas off momentarily you're just never gonna get fourth gear. Once in fourth gear there appears to be a flat spot – hopefully this won't be there once the jetting is sorted.

"Everything else on this bike is good – the brakes and controls feel awesome – and to be honest new bikes are so good these days that the faults I've mentioned are more about me being picky than major problems.

"Overall I'm pretty impressed with the YZF250 – it does everything reasonably well and turns much better than last year's bike. It might not be my favourite 250F of '07 but it's still a very capable bike for all levels of rider."



specifications YZF250F

Capacity:	249cc
Bore and stroke:	77mm x 53.6mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	Keihin FCR-MX37mm H/1
Front suspension:	Kayaba fork (300mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Kayaba shock (307mm travel)
Front brake:	250mm disc
Rear brake:	245mm disc
Wheelbase:	1469mm
Seat height:	997mm

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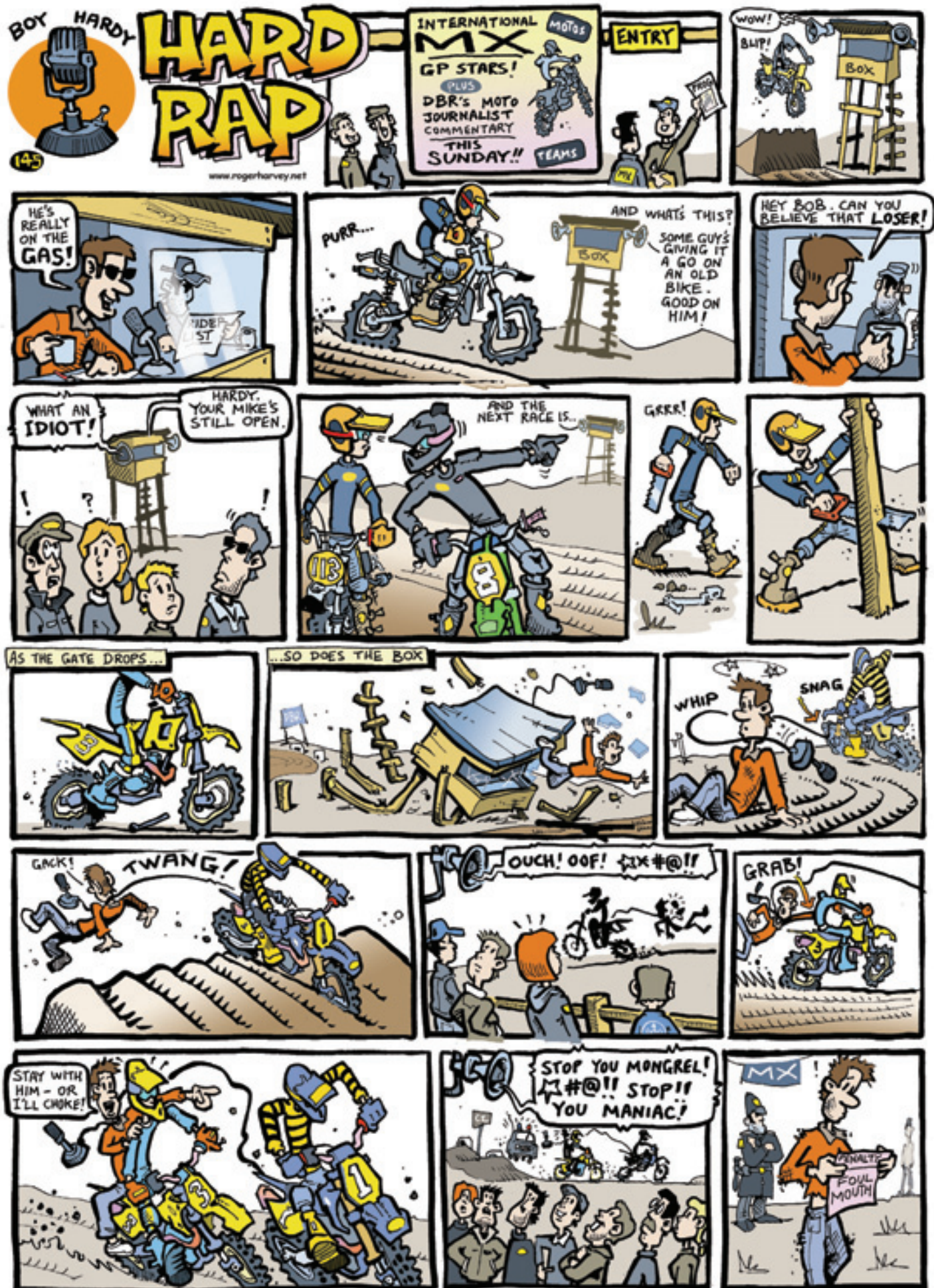
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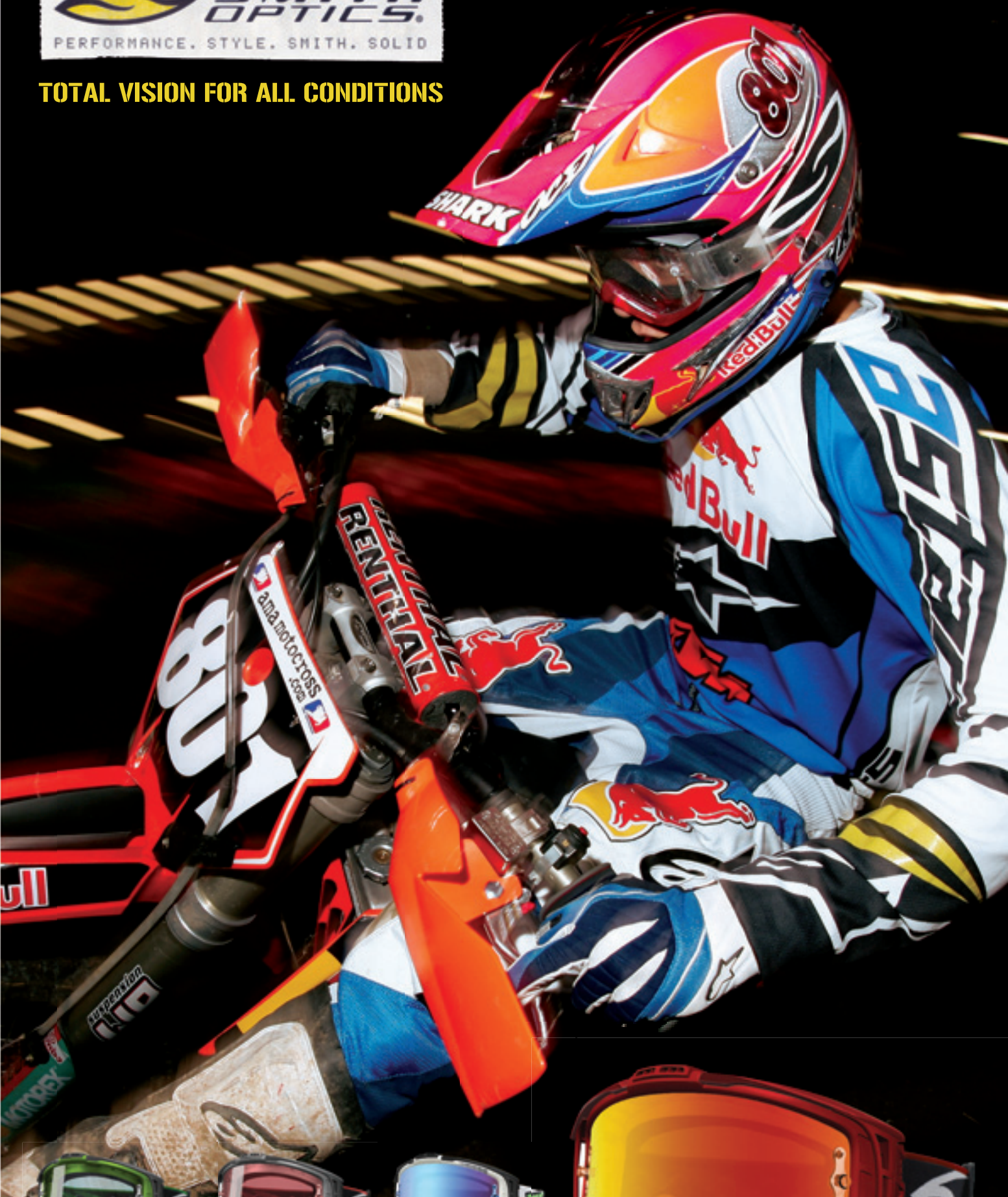
Mike Brown turns it on at Bercy – the popular American's back in Europe full-time in '07

BROWNIE'S BACK!

One of the few riders to win titles on both sides of the Atlantic, Downtown Mike Brown left the UK under a cloud a few races into the '05 season. But now he's back and mixing it up in MX1 and MX2...


Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

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FEW RIDERS have won titles on both sides of the Atlantic but Mike Brown, the 34-year-old from Tennessee who has combined motocross US and Euro style for the past decade, is back over here fourth time around in 2007.

A solid supercrosser but never a champ indoors, Mike has been an outstanding outdoor talent and beat Jamie Dobb for the UK #1 plate in Y2K before returning to the US to win a gripping 2001 title chase from Grant Langston and then came desperately close again two years later.

Having ridden factory Yams for Team Rinaldi in 1997 and Hondas for Dave Thorpe in '99 and '00, Mike's last GP association with RWJ in 2005 was very short-lived but he is already looking forward to his new challenge, combining MX1 and MX2 for CAS Honda.

"Yep, it should be good this time. I'm on one of the best teams over here and the bikes have been going good. I stayed on for a week after the Nations riding the 250F and we got a lot done already that week and then I've been here again the week before Bercy. But I've been riding non-stop while I've been home too."

One reason for Mike turning his back every couple of years on the big money US scene is the AMA regulation of who may ride MX2 in supercross, the so-called 'pointing out' system.

"That is a problem. I had another year on Suzuki in the States if I'd wanted it but I got out of it. I didn't want to be riding a 450 in SX and a 250 outdoor but I didn't have fun this last year doing what I was doing. I'm still among the front runners outdoor but the chance to come back to ride for a good team over here was more interesting.

"I like the 450 outdoors and for sure the bigger bike is the most important to me, one more chance at the GPs. I have fun riding the 250 in practice anyway, it keeps your corner speed up – you don't get lazy like you do when you're riding a 450 all the time. Okay, the 250F also picks up good but you still have to work on it going into the turns at this level if you want to stay competitive.

"It definitely helps you to keep your corner speed up when you get back on the 450. Switching, you just have to remember you're back on the 450 but the first time you open it up you get a reminder. There's too much power in any 450 but it's always better to have too much than not enough.

"I've ridden the CAS 450 and I like the way the team set it up. I'm not coming this far just to ride in the pack and obviously I'd like to go for the championship but that will be tough. For sure I'd like to win a race or two at the GPs but there are a lot of good guys out there – Coppins, ▶



Racing for Dave Thorpe's team in Y2K



Brownie in Brit champ action at Polesworth in '05 – one round later it was all over for him

Brownie on...

2005

"I'm still not supposed to say anything but I think everyone knows what happened. All of the money was coming from [Rob] Bradley and I got paid eventually. But back then I felt I didn't need to be that far away from home and not getting paid.

"I should never have ridden at all at Lyng. I was so frustrated with the whole situation but someone at Honda told me to do it. But halfway through the first race, I just decided I'm done. I'd already made my mind up I was going home and I hadn't got my heart in it – I shouldn't have gone out there.

"It was not a good situation but that's all behind us. I'm on a good team and Mark Davies is fully behind us. Mark understood back then too – he's a real good guy."



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Brownie on... An American in Europe

"Ryan Mills is from New York and he shouldn't have so many problems settling down as a Californian but he's going to be based in Italy and that's difficult. I know that from experience. I was there a whole year and it took me the whole year to get used to it.

"Language is the biggest problem. I was a little older already when I came over then but even I was crying to go home. Rinaldi is a great team but there are still times when we were on our own, just me and my wife. Even going to the grocery store was not easy. I think if an American comes over they are better to come over to England or Belgium where the people will speak English to you.

"My little boy's three-and-a-half now and he loves motorcycling. He's been out training for three or four months now but it makes me nervous. He's off all of next year again before he starts school so they'll be coming over to Europe. They'll probably be going back more often than me. The schedule is pretty full with the world and the British.

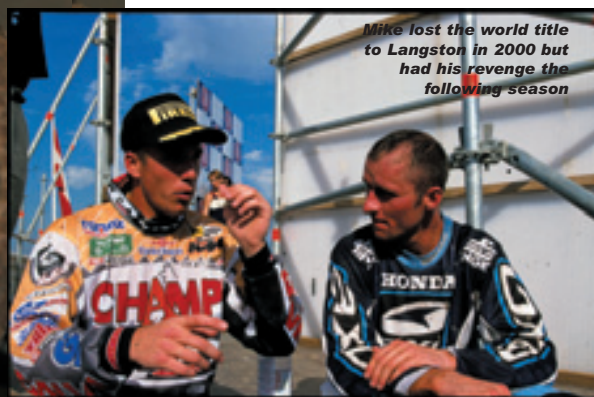
"I'll be staying with my buddy Finbarr [Kneafsey] most of the time near Reading but with the team also having their base in Belgium, for sure. I will be going there if we have a sand race coming up. The team has a good set-up there, a good workshop, a place to stay and plenty of tracks. I've been testing a lot at Lommel and if you can ride that stuff you can ride anything."

Stribos, Ramon and a lot more."

But deep down CAS and Honda are looking to the home front and MX2 to get returns for their investment. "The 250 is very important for Honda UK – they would like to win both classes in Britain." What Mike does not say – but which Harry Ainsworth divulged back in the autumn – is that Honda and CAS are looking to re-establish the red bikes as a leading force in the GPs in the smaller class after a miserable '06 campaign without a single podium and top-ranked runner being Matti Seistola in 17th. Mike's job this summer will be to help CAS develop the 250F for a full-scale onslaught on the world in 2008.

"I feel I'm pretty good at giving the team feedback. All the experience I have from so many years in the sport and everyone who has been at Pro Circuit learns how to test. Most guys never tore a motor down but I can do that and put it back together again so I know what's going on inside and I think that helps. It's one thing to be telling the team the bike is doing this or that on the track but when you can tell them you feel it could be the cam or whatever, that helps the entire team.

"We've only been working on it for a few weeks but we already have good power. The CAS team has so much stuff – they have two or three solutions for every aspect of the bike, whether it be from Honda or after-market. It should be good."



Mike lost the world title to Langston in 2000 but had his revenge the following season

Brownie on... Bercy

"I think I've probably been to Bercy more than any other American now. I don't like riding 450 SX but I do like riding here and on the smaller bikes it's still fun, not so much pressure. I kinda have an open invitation from Xavier to come back whenever I want.

"It's a pity for the younger guys back home that the teams stop them coming over here. Pro Circuit in particular don't like their riders coming over here. You can understand it in a way. They're all testing to get ready and even the 250F teams and riders are all going to Canada now.

"The factories pay so much money to the riders, they don't want to take a chance on them getting hurt. I mean it's not just them, even Harry said to me on Wednesday he didn't care how I got on here, just not to get hurt. I understand that and we all have to be there in February when it's time to race."





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Princey on... Brownie

CAS team boss Neil Prince made the decision to hire Mike Brown for '07 so it makes pretty good sense to get his take on the former AMA champ's return to Britain.

"I think you just need the right team to make any bike competitive. This is the first time we have been asked to take on the challenge of the 250 but Andy [Pringle] has been working on it for about a month now, just trying to build the bike which we feel will be capable of taking a shot at the British championship.

"It's just a matter of time and putting the right pieces together. The teams who have tried it before don't have the right set-up to do it.

"I've hired Mike because I feel he can still ride as hard and fast as anyone and he has confirmed that this last week. I believe that when the bike is made for the way he rides it will be capable of doing the job. I rode the bike myself for three days before Mike arrived. We still have some way to go but already in a few days we have made great strides and Mike's feedback is great.

"One big thing is that Mike is capable of noticing little differences and being able to pinpoint the possible cause of any deficiency, not like the young kids who just know that they can't ride the bike fast as it is set up for that session.

You can't build a winning bike without the feedback and Mike can tell us exactly how the clutch feels and so on.

"There's no big secret with factory bits all over the place. It's all Honda bits and after-market parts. You just need the time to put everything in the right place, to find the best package. To be honest the Honda parts are all extremely good, you just need to put the ingredients together. Leo Vinci have made a new pipe specifically for the CRF250 which is performing fantastically but then you have to look at the carburettor setting again to find out what works best. You can't just bolt parts on – you've got to make everything work in harmony.

"This is very similar to the way we have developed our MX1 bikes. The Honda is a very good bike straight out of the crate and you don't have to go very far to produce a bike capable of winning at the top level. A lot of people go a long way away from the standard bike and get lost.

"I don't foresee any problems for Mike to ride two separate classes, MX1 in the GPs and MX2 at home.

Obviously he will concentrate on riding the bike which he will race the following weekend but from what we have seen so far he is very versatile. He just needs the right amount of time on the bike.

"Our main focus is still the MX1 world championship but riding the MX2 at the British will give him something different through the year, keep him sharp and also upgrade the championship itself even more. For us it is a really good challenge. And racing two classes will make sure Andy doesn't get lazy. Joking! Andy's definitely not lazy and what he has already done with this bike is quite amazing."



Princey, Brownie and Pringle in relaxed mood at Bercy

NUMBER ONE!

In only 10 years One Industries has gone from being a just-starting-out sticker maker to the world's leading decal company thanks to cutting edge design driven by pure passion...

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

OF ALL the attributes needed to succeed in the highly competitive global MX industry, passion is right up there with the most important qualities. Without it no company, rider, team or organisation – no matter how big or small – will truly succeed. Letting the obsessive desire to be involved in the greatest sport on earth lead the way is what separates the motocross industry's pioneering companies from their competitors.

One company that's more than a little passionate about motocross is One Industries. A decade old this January, the company that started out simply wanting to design bike graphics its own way is now the world's leading motorcycle decal company backed by one of the most pioneering design teams in the industry. Adding helmets and casual clothing to its product line-up in recent years, One Industries is a company that's gone a long way in a short time.

"I think like most people in motocross we are involved because we are enthusiasts, because we love the sport," admits Ludo Boinnard, co-founder of One Industries. "Both Mark [Blanchard] and myself have been fans of motocross our whole lives. It's what we eat, sleep and breathe."

With Ludo a former French enduro racer turned freelance export manager in the US and Mark a former photo-journalist turned designer, One Industries officially started business in January '97. With Ludo having become disillusioned with the companies he was working with and with Mark, a JT Racing employee at the time, having become disinterested in the company's move from motocross into paintball, the pair decided to start their own company.

"Mark was incredibly enthusiastic about starting our own company. I thought about it for six months and then moved to San Diego in October '96. He was so tired of paintball accessories that he had months and months of brainstorming and had already decided upon the company name – One Industries."

Releasing its first products in January '97, business grew quickly. "When we launched our first graphics the stuff available from many of the other graphics companies was terrible," recalls Ludo. "Other companies would be mixing barbed wire with chequered flags with purple colours – they were really bad. Our products were so much simpler. We couldn't believe how well we were received by the industry."

With consumers liking its products, One Industries went from strength to strength. Expanding its line of products along with its premises, the speed with which the company took off surpassed even Ludo and Mark's greatest expectations. "In January '97 there weren't so many graphics companies but 12 months later we counted 23 graphics companies in the US. There was a huge boom – it became the cool company to start."

"Our growth has been tremendous but it has been a controlled growth," explains Ludo. "Yes, we have been very lucky but we have also not made any mistakes. I like to think that we are still just a small graphics company, although things are pretty big now."

"Every year since we started we've heard rumours that we've started making riding gear. We have tried to plan our growth, if you go crazy things can go wrong. Some other graphics companies went straight into doing clothing and a bunch of other things and they disappeared straight away."

Since the company started there have been several key moments along the way, each one of them helping the brand become bigger and stronger. "The first would be when we started, January '97. The second six months later when we brought out the Hurricane kit," recalls Ludo, referring to the iconic yellow and black Bob Hannah Yamaha plastic and decal kits.

"Signing factory Suzuki with Albertyn, K-Dub and Pastrana was a big moment for us at the time because it was the first big team we signed. The helmet programme was amazing and the Bailey programme was tremendous too."

Helping One Industries become much more than just a



Old and new! Ludo with two of his bikes – the Suzuki's his current race machine





Marc cracks on with the '07 graphics range

Getting it off his chest Ludo lets rip

"I love four-strokes and I hate four-strokes," explains Ludo when asked what it is that angers him about motocross seven years into the 21st Century. "The noise issues that are affecting our sport at the moment are really disturbing. When Joël Smets was racing four-strokes at the beginning of his career he had the quietest bike on the track. Why aren't we making the new generation of four-strokes as quiet as they used to be? If we don't we will kill our sport because tracks will keep getting closed."

"Also, what bothers me is the amount of money that it takes to keep a four-stroke running. We are going to lose a lot of great future champions because they simply can't afford to race anymore. It bugs me to see the Lites class totally taken over by four-strokes and teams with big budgets – it's supposed to be the class for up and coming youngsters."

"Another thing, most four-strokes still have plenty of power when they're not jetted correctly, which means their owners don't worry about it if they don't run perfectly. When a rider's four-stroke bogs on the face of a jump and he crashes and gets paralysed, that bugs me too. On a two-stroke that would never have happened because his bike would have run like sh*t and he would have got it fixed."

"Neck injuries also concern me. Obviously, working with David Bailey has opened my eyes to just how hard life is in a wheelchair. What annoys me is why the AMA doesn't force kids under 10 years old to wear a neck brace. If they did everyone would be wearing them in 10 years time. Bikes are faster than they used to be and more and more people are getting hurt now. We need to wake up to the realisation that people are getting paralysed – we all need to think seriously about wearing neck braces."



In One Industries reception with Dogger's old lid



Marc's baldy head is a constant source of amusement

graphics company was the arrival of the firm's first MX helmets in January '04. Radically different to most helmets available at the time, the Trooper and Kombat lids showed that One Industries was about much more than just cool stickers.

"What's funny about the helmets is that we spoke to a helmet manufacturer about producing a helmet for use in our second year of business. We weren't even ready to start thinking about helmets seriously but already we knew that we wanted to produce something different to what was already in the market.

"We had one shot at helmets. If we didn't get it right then we would never have recovered. We had to show that we were serious about producing a quality helmet and not just a cool helmet. It took almost two years to develop the helmet.

"If someone would have told me that we would be associated with David Bailey I would have laughed 10 years ago. It's kind of a full circle thing for Mark because David was a JT athlete and then when he got hurt he worked in the design department for a while so they have been friends for a long time – 20 years later David was thrilled with what we did with the replica helmet and the bike. It was great for him because little did we know when we started the association that he would need the financial help but it was also great for us – it elevated One Industries to a new level."

As the company has grown so too has the list of teams using One Industries graphics. "We don't need to be associated with every factory team but yes it does help the sales of our products," admits Ludo, touching on the importance of marketing products in the correct way.

"What we do at One Industries we don't really think of as marketing. We should because we are in business and we have to sell our products. The image of our company is what we like, what we do. Yes, we make calculations about what and how we present our products but we don't – and I hate using the word 'cool' – set out to make cool products. What we do, the way we like doing it, is simply the way we think it should be done."

So which companies does One Industries look up to, if any? "The company I respect the most in motocross is Fox," answers Ludo with no hesitation. "They are the real leaders and I hope they remain that way forever. It is a rare brand in motocross today because it has soul. I don't see any other brand with soul. A lot of companies are just about business and selling more products but Fox is different. I hope that One Industries, on a different scale, can become like them. There is a strong mutual respect between the two companies which is great."

So what will the next 10 years hold for One Industries? "Will we continue to grow, will we fail miserably, will we stagnate? I don't know," admits Ludo. "We moved in to our current building three years ago and we didn't know what we were going to do with all the space at the time. Now we are looking to move again because we have outgrown the place.

For sure we are going to keep pushing the graphics business. We are now officially the number one graphics company in Australia, UK, Spain and I hear in the States too. We started with a goal of being number two in every country in the world with our graphics. We have achieved better than that now. We want to keep pushing our three divisions – graphics, helmets and casual clothing – before deciding if we are going to move into new areas."



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SEAL SURGERY

Blown a seal and feeling depressed about it? Well turn that frown upside down with Wakker's wonderful seal-servicing walkthrough

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Hot Tub

YOU KNOW that sinking feeling when you go to roll the weapon out on a Sunday morning and see a pool of fork oil on the garage floor? It sucks – and winter is the time of year when your fork seals are most likely to blow.

The very latest bikes are coming to us fitted with twin-chamber forks. The longest running twins are the Showa forks which have been fitted to the Hondas for a few years and now come stock on the KX250Fs.

Seal servicing on this type of fork is possible with a couple of special tools. You'll need a fork top spanner, 47mm seal driver, a small plastic bag and an internal rod holder as well as some form of buzz gun with 21mm socket to undo the base holder for the internal chamber. You'll also need a 21mm and 17mm spanner as well as a flat blade screwdriver to perform this fork surgery. Other equipment needed is a sturdy bench and vice, a measuring jug, a heat gun and an oil catcher.

The special tools are available from Motion Pro and also your local dealer can order tools for you from the manufacturers.



pic:01



pic:02



pic:02a



pic:03



pic:04



pic:05

pic:01 With your forks removed and very clean, the first step to seal bliss is to check each clicker to see how many clicks out they are. To do this you need to wind them in a clockwise direction making a note of how many clicks you hear before the screws bottom out. For instance if you hear 12 clicks on your compression screw and 14 on the rebound the settings would be comp +/- 12, reb +/- 14. Unless you've got a ridiculously good memory I'd suggest you write these down so when you finish both legs will be the same as before.

pic:02 The top of the fork can now be loosened with the special spanner. If you do not have the tool then you can gently clamp the top in the vice and turn the fork body to loosen. You may need to heat the leg slightly to make it easier to loosen if the area you are working in is cold.

pic:03 The outer leg can now slide down and the fork bottom must be clamped in the vice. Be careful not to damage the fork bottom. Using a 21mm socket undo the bottom holder. Again, you may need to heat this area with a heat gun

to make it easy to loosen. It is really important to make sure you use a good quality socket on this part as it is easily damaged.

pic:04 With your palm on the top of the fork push down. This will release the oil from inside the fork as the fork bottom is pushed out of position. The fork holding tool can now be slotted into position so the bottom can be undone from the base of the internal chamber shaft with the 21mm and 17mm spanner. Hold the 17mm in place and undo the 21mm part.



pic:06



pic:07



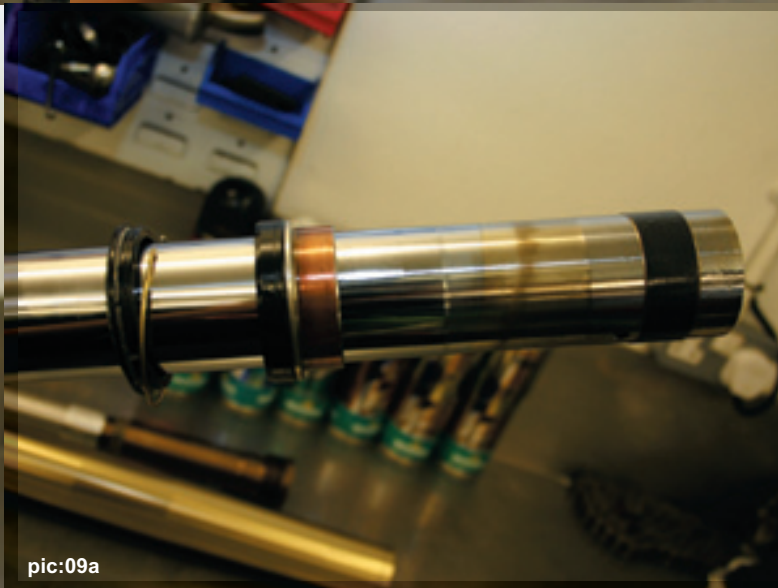
pic:08



pic:08a



pic:09



pic:09a

pic:05 The base holder can now be taken off and the rebound adjuster rod from inside the shaft will slide out. Remove the holder and slide the internal chamber and spring out of the fork body and place somewhere clean and safe (I know, that's stating the obvious).

pic:06 Using a flat blade screwdriver carefully prise the dust seal out of position and clean the area around the inner seal to reveal the holding clip. Again using the flat blade prise the clip out of its holding position.

pic:07 Gently heat the outer fork leg around the seal area to make it easier to split the fork apart. Using a firm grip on the outer leg slide and extend it up away from the lower fork leg. You will feel it try to come to a stop. Tap the outer leg at this point and the leg will come apart into two sections.

pic:08 Remove, inspect and clean the bushes as well as the entire sliding surface of the lower chrome leg. Stone chips on the chrome will tear the next seal you fit. If there are chips present

on the chrome, use a small grinding stone or a tiny file and emery paper to smooth away the problem areas.

pic:09 With all parts clean it is time for re-assembly. Lightly grease the inside lip of the new seal and the dust seal. If you do not have seal-grease use some racing grease mixed with a little fork oil.

Place the plastic bag over the top of the fork leg and slip the seal gently over the top of the leg making sure you don't cause any

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damage to the seal. Make sure you put all parts back in the order they came off in. Dust seal, clip, oil seal. Take the bag off and replace the two bushes in order.

pic:010 Replace the outer leg onto the lower leg and push the parts into place by hand, leaving the dust seal and clip at the bottom of the lower leg. Now put the seal driver into place and tap the seal up into the body of the outer leg. You will feel the bushes and seal knock into place. Replace the holding clip into its position to hold the seal in place and push the dust seal into place with your fingers.

pic:011 Drop the spring back inside the fork assembly and replace the inner chamber. Push down on the inner chamber and secure in place as it protrudes out of the bottom of the lower leg using the special holder.

Slide the rebound adjuster rod back into position. You will feel it find home when it slips into position with its top holding position. If you do not refit this part correctly the rod will be damaged at the next stage of assembly.

Screw the bottom holder into position and tighten into place. The special holder can be removed and the bottom of the fork will slip into place, tighten firmly into position.

pic:012 Fill your measuring jug with 360ml of 5wt fork oil and pour into the fork body. Check your owner's manual for adjustable range on oil – 360ml is an average amount. Normally go 20ml less for softer feeling and 20ml more for a little harder feeling.

pic:013 Lift the outer body and fit the top cap into position. Now reset the clickers on the leg, refit the fork into the bike, stand back, cross your arms and be proud of yourself. All that remains to do now is call that special lady in your life into the garage and demand to know when she's gonna clean up the leaked fork oil!



pic:010



pic:011



pic:011a



pic:011b



pic:011c



pic:012

pic:013



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX Journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

TONI EL TIGER!

Long before his son Toni became a MotoGP hero,
Toni Elias was Spain's first ever motocross superstar

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

TWO MONTHS ago Spanish whizzkid Toni Elias won his fairytale first MotoGP in Portugal by two-thousandths of an unexpected second from a startled Valentino Rossi – unexpected because Toni's team, Fortuna Honda, had already foolishly fired the lad!

Cameras instantly captured Toni's dad, Toni, exploding with joy and rapture at his son's sensational success. Antonio the Elder looked scarcely older than in his distant heyday as Spain's first motocross superstar. Just the odd glint of silver in his thick, black hair and bushy eyebrows!

Elias entered 250 GPs on a Bultaco in the late seventies when that world championship traditionally opened at Sabadell on the outskirts of his native Barcelona.

A truly enormous, cliff-sided amphitheatre, awesome in its sheer scale, Sabadell hosted the Spanish GP from 1969 until 1985 when the urban sprawl of Spain's spectacular second city eventually engulfed its rugged landscape.

Belgian legend Joel Robert won for the first three years. His Suzuki team-mate Sylvain Geboers deposed him in 1972, then 'the first American' Jim Pomeroy scored his historic maiden victory on a Bultaco in 1973.

The following seasons saw world champions like Gennady Moiseev, Heikki Mikkola and in 1978 Harry Everts, also mounted on a Bultaco, take the spoils.

Harry's team-mate that day was Toni Elias, an even shorter bloke than Stefan's dad! While Harry went one-eight for overall victory and the early lead in the championship, Elias nabbed a point for tenth in race two before concentrating on Spanish national duty.

Returning prodigal Jim Pomeroy joined Elias at Bultaco in 1979. They arrived at Sabadell early in April with a brace of brand new factory bikes they'd first ridden just two days earlier!

Called the 'Ensanche', these new motors featured gear primary drive and reed valve induction for the first time although the local factory was already running into a cash crisis that would see Pomeroy depart mid-season.

1979 marked my own maiden voyage to this breathtaking circuit, full of huge drops, climbs, cambers and jumps. I travelled down as counterfeit mechanic with Midlands British Open championship contender Paul Harrison and his lovely mum, 'PH' making his grand prix debut on a Berrill Maico.

We made the long haul through France and over the Pyrenees in the inevitable Ford Transit van. PH was one of four British entrants on the 'ACU grading list' (this was pre-qualifying for GPs, of course!). Alongside him were Maico trio Neil Hudson, Rob Hooper and Brummie Vaughan Semmens on the Doug Wheeler-backed bike.

They faced one unusual rival in probably the first – and last – Cuban to compete in a motocross GP, Norberto Merino, on a Montesa. But the biggest star and a race winner at Sabadell for the previous two years was Husqvarna's Hakan Carlqvist. The buck-toothed 25-year-old Swede finished seventh in the 1978 series just behind Everts and also dominated the Trophee des Nations at Kester in September, travelling alone with girlfriend Annelie and acting as his own mechanic all season.

He tested Italian Betas for 1979 and was sorely tempted to switch marques until a panicking Husqvarna agreed to a package that included transport and recently-retired Torleif Hansen's ice-cool spannerman Tommy Jansson.

Beneath polished blue skies in north-eastern Spain on April 8 the 250 GP campaign scorched into searing action. 50,000 fans crammed not only the clifftops and ledges but also the towering electricity pylons that stalked dramatically round the rim of this amazing valley. CZ's popular veteran Jaroslav Falta

A MAP
of
THE INTERNAL PROVINCES
OF
NEW SPAIN.

The following is from the collection of maps owned by the
National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C. It is a
reproduction of a map of the territory of the United States
of America, as it appeared in 1793.

REFERENCE



Hakan Carlqvist 'scrubs'
his way to victory in
Spain in 1979

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Beater	Titulaire	★Wife	Femme
Occupation	GRAPHIC DESIGNER		
Profession			
Place of birth	BILLINGHAM		
Lieu de naissance			
Date of birth	9/3/47		

Usual signature of bearer

Signature du titulaire

Usual signature of wife



Toni Elias became Spain's first MX superstar one day back in 1979

bolted up a huge starting straight and led throughout on a track perfectly suited to his irrepressible balls-out riding style.

Behind him, as Carlqvist forced through the dust from a lowly start, ebullient American Marty Moates moved second ahead of Jan Kristofferson (Yamaha), Patrick Boniface (Honda) and Rolf Dieffenbach – debuting a works Uni-Trak Kawasaki – until alleged rear shock problems pushed Marty's LOP Yamaha downfield.

Semmens and Hudson gated seventh and 11th, Vaughan whipping uphill inside Boniface before the Frenchman retired with a shattered front wheel. Pomeroy collapsed his rear wheel as a coruscating Semmens and 'Nellie' Hudson stormed past in Carlqvist's menacing wake.

By halfway 'Carla' had reached third behind Falta and Dieffenbach and four crazy laps later the powerful Swede swept past the big, swarthy German who slid off his Kawasaki. Rolf remounted still third and Semmens hurtled downhill past the chequered flag two bike lengths ahead of Hudson to finish a fine fourth.

This vivid result for the distinctive orange and maroon Doug Wheeler rider turned a few GP heads! Who was this guy? He hadn't even an entry for any more rounds, yet had forcefully despatched established title challengers Hudson and Russian duo Gennady Moiseev and Vladimir Kavinov for his first ever grand prix points!

In eighth place behind his wild Montesa-mounted compatriot Fernando Munoz, Toni Elias brought the surviving Bultaco home ahead of Kristofferson and Jaak van Velthoven's KTM. Hooper and Harrison finished outside the top 20, the latter detuned when a third corner melee wiped out a lively start.

Works Maico rider (and son-of-the-boss), lanky German Hans Maisch headed race two from a terrier half his height! The valley absolutely erupted as tiny Toni Elias burst off the blocks second ahead of Jean-Paul Mingels (Yamaha), defending champion Moiseev (14th after a terrible start in race one), Carla, Hudson, Falta, Pomeroy and Dieffenbach. Semmens, having locked arms and lost out on the start straight, was buried back in 30th place from where he stormed aggressively back to 13th and a stunning sixth overall.

Carlqvist, riding with immense gusto and panache on the slippery blue-groove surface, powered through to third before picking off both



Six years earlier, Jim Pomeroy became the first American to win a GP when he came out on top at Sabadell

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Elias and Maisch on lap 10 and pulling away. Behind these three, a thrilling battle involving Moiseev, Pomeroy and Hudson climaxed after 20 minutes when Jimmy Lee crashed luridly attempting a downhill leap over Moiseev's KTM. Minus a fingernail the Californian, a hero in Spain since his 1973 win, clambered back on behind Falta and Dieffenbach to rescue ninth and two painful points

Four fulminating laps later Moiseev fell under pressure from Hudson and also lost out to Falta. Then, to a deafening uproar Elias, inspired by the frantic crowd, exploded past a surprised Maisch! Hans promptly crashed and, winded, lost out to Hudson two laps later. Nellie launched a late assault but failed to catch a jubilant Antonio as he flew triumphantly past the flag to record his best-ever GP result, a resounding second.

Maisch just clung on to fourth ahead of Falta, while both Hooper and Harrison would have been in the points today, finishing 16th and 18th respectively. And Norbert Merino? The Cuban was well chuffed with 24th in his only ever grand prix!

But Hakan Carlqvist, sideways, on the gas and already perfecting the 'Carla Scrub' 35 years ahead of 'Bubba' Stewart, gave a taste of what was to come that year with a rousing overall victory in front of Czech surprise package Falta. And third was Hudson by a single point from an ecstatic Elias!

Equally ecstatic was one of those fearless kids high up the electricity pylons, a six-year-old called Carlos Checa, destined to become a factory MotoGP road racer and, 26 years on, a rival of Toni Elias junior. The Elias and Checa families remain firm friends to this day and meet regularly for dinner every three weeks!

Elias the Elder scored further points in Yugoslavia and France and ended the year 20th in the championship, just two places behind Jim Pomeroy who, ironically, joined Beta for the final few rounds! And as the Bultaco factory crumbled Elias signed up with rival Spanish manufacturers Derbi to contest 125 GPs in 1980, his best result (behind Harry Everts!) a fifth in Austria.

Toni never again attained the dizzy heights of that momentous day at Sabadell in April 1979 so I hope Elias junior can taste more Moto GP glory to compensate his devoted dad. Apparently a fresh contract from Fortuna Honda landed on the lad's desk the morning after his Portuguese party!



*Defending world 250cc
champ Gennady Moiseev*



*The Spanish fans make
the most of a improvised
grandstand as Jaak Van
Velthoven touches down*



*Vaughan Semmens
was a fine fourth in
the opening moto*

GRANT LANGSTON

Langston was linked to 450cc rides with Pro-Circuit and the factory Kawasaki teams but instead signed for Yamaha





Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently launched a new bi-weekly MX magazine – Motocross Illustrated – covering both AMA and GP action. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

MOTO MOUTH!

Grant Langston's return to full-factory status will only make the racing better

Grant Langston is an enigma in motocross racing. Ask him a question and he won't only answer that question, he'll answer the next two you planned to ask as well. On top of that, he's the only rider ever to win every single major professional 125cc title – a 125cc world championship, a 125cc national championship and both regional SX championships.

We got a chance to sit down with Grant recently and discuss his future – which includes a two-year deal with Team Yamaha and a third-year option.

DBR: You used to be known as more of an outdoor guy but in the last couple years you won indoor titles while your team-mates won outdoors. Why is that?

GL: "There were two things between last year ['05] and this year ['06]. Both years supercross went pretty smooth to be honest. Last year I ended up dislocating my ankle at

Hangtown and that knocked me out of the running. I wasn't able to train and I couldn't ride Mt Morris the next week.

"Then this year the same thing. Supercross went pretty smooth then at Vegas on press day – it was just one of those days where everything was rushed. I have very sensitive eyes to light and I always wear tinted lenses in the daytime. At Vegas I didn't have any gear or goggles and it was a pretty frustrating day because everything wasn't going as planned. I rushed out to get to the track when everyone else was riding and I was squinting because the sun was shining.

"I was wearing some goggles with a clear lens that they just found laying in the truck and I started jumping through the rhythm section and I was going three-three-single and then to the berm. The next time I did it I moved probably a foot to the right, the glare was

on the dirt because it was so light-coloured and I hit a knuckle in the jump. Byrne was standing down there and he told me afterward that my tyre tracks left halfway up the face so that when I took off I didn't get the lift and I ended. I touched the third one with the front wheel, then bounced and when I went over the bars I put both my hands out and ended up dislocating my wrist.

"So there again, before the outdoors started, it was over with. It was really frustrating because in the past I was always trying to work on my supercross skills and every year I was always either close to winning or winning an outdoor championship and these last two years outdoors have been a disappointment. Every year I've gone in thinking it was my year. Last year I was flying in the off-season leading up to the Nationals and it's just a bummer the way it ended up.

"Same thing this year. Villopoto won and I'm not

GRANT LANGSTON

going to take anything away from him – he is the champion – but I just know that my pace was as good if not better when we were practising. That was kind of cool because we got along and we rode together and tested together so it would've just been a good heads-up battle. To not be there is disappointing. He rode great and I don't ever want to take any sort of glory away from him because he deserves it and he got stronger as the season went on.

"But it would've been nice to have at least been there to make it more interesting. You can't dwell on the past, though. That chapter's done and I'm just putting my head down and looking forward and I'm enthusiastic about my re-entry into the 450s and on a much better bike."

DBR: The last time you raced a 450 you had the carpal tunnel issue and people were a bit down on you saying you were a quitter or something.

GL: "It's a little annoying sometimes because there are people who change like the wind. You win one day and you're the man, the next day you have a bad race and... It just kind of drives me nuts. I don't understand it. To me, a fan is a fan, through thick or thin."

"There are people who are dedicated fans and one of the people who was a fan of mine was Mitch [Payton] which is why he came to me and said 'I think I can put you back where you want to be'. Supercross went maybe a little better than both of us may have expected and outdoors was a disappointment because I never got through a full season. It was tough. It was disappointing, for sure."

DBR: Mitch actually said that when you came over on KTM from Europe he tried to hire you first.

GL: "I still remember it. I was driving to Croatia and it was the fourth round of the GPs in 2000, probably around

April. I remember getting this phone call. It was like, 'Grant?' 'Yeah!' 'Mitch Payton, Pro Circuit Kawasaki, how are you?' We chat a little bit, then all of a sudden he was like, 'would you be interested in coming to ride for me in the States next year?' I didn't even hesitate. I was like, 'damn straight! I'd love to!' From that day he planted a seed in my head that I was going to the US.

"My dad even said, 'what if you don't end up winning this world title?' I was leading the points so I was like, 'I'm going either way. I'm over it here. I want to go to the US'. But KTM got Red Bull involved and they decided they were going to make a big push in the US. It was a really long, tough decision but I stayed with KTM in all honesty because I knew half the technicians that were going with KTM and I knew with PC I'd be riding for a team where I didn't know anyone."

"I didn't know Mitch and I was just so nervous that having some people in my corner at KTM kind of eased the pain. It was a really tough decision. I was confident that KTM would have great bikes and the 125 wasn't bad but I still think Mitch had better bikes."

"It was funny, though, because Mitch is like a little girl sometimes. He keeps letters and stuff and he still had a fax that I had sent him because when I was living in Europe we were on such a tight budget in the beginning that I couldn't afford to sit on the phone for a half-hour so I hand-wrote a fax telling him how I appreciated his interest and that he got the ball rolling. When I went to sign my deal at the shop two years ago he pulled it out."

"It just shows you how passionate he is and how these little things kind of stick out and we had a great time. I loved working with him and we have a lot of good memories and after how miserable racing and riding was for me in '04, the last two years have been such a pleasure and such a joy. Honestly, there was a stage where I thought about quitting – I was so miserable."





Langston now has a full house of the major 125cc titles

DBR: With the way the AMA has changed the eligibility requirements for racing, someone like you couldn't go from a 450 ride back down to reviving your career on a 250F and then move back again. It's like the safety net's been taken away...

GL: "I know what you're saying and my opinion, I think it's so stupid. It's one of the most ridiculous things and I don't understand why they try to do it. There's great racing in the 125s and there's great racing in the 250s. I don't like their stupid names and I don't like their rules. It's ridiculous. What you're doing now is you're taking a class that has a lot of good racing and you're going to take every guy that wins a title and force them into the 450s."

"There's only a good nine or 10 factory rides and there are probably that many past champions in that class right now. There are more guys moving up than guys retiring so what are you going to have? You're going to have a frickin' two-time 125 champion riding for – and no offence – the Subway Honda team or something. What is that guy really going to look forward to, knowing that he's moving up against stiffer competition on non-factory stuff? And you're going to have 15 or 16-year-old kids that are offered contracts for millions of dollars that have never proven themselves."

"In my opinion you deserve what you earn. I'm not saying I'm jealous but I'm saying that you're taking from the guys that have proven themselves. You're going to have a class full of kids that the average guy in the stands doesn't know."

"I think it takes away the credibility. I'm not planning on going back to 125s so it doesn't change things for me. My goal is to be good enough that I have a factory ride until I'm done racing."

DBR: Let's move on to what's going on now. You've landed yourself a solid factory ride now but you talked about riding 450s for Mitch's team and also were rumoured to be linked to Kawasaki's factory team and others. How did this all play out?

GL: "Basically, I knew I was moving up. My goal was to win the West Coast to do the whole 'completion' thing so that I'd have a 125cc world championship, AMA national championship and both SX championships. Mitch was talking about doing a team and I thought that would be kind of fun to be on the sort of non-factory team and still have great stuff and good sponsors behind it and then that never really happened."

"I think it was too much in too short of a time. Mitch isn't the kind of guy that's going to say, 'okay, I have a bunch of money so I'm going to do it'. No, he wants to do testing, development, have the race team ready, have two riders he wants etc. I think when he realized it wasn't the right timing he got Monster to put their money in with the factory Kawasaki team."

"The whole deal in a nutshell was that Yamaha really, really wanted me and Kawasaki would like to have me. I'm not putting anyone down, I just felt that being here I am Yamaha's factory guy because I'm their only 450 guy."

"I just got the feeling that they really wanted me and I understand that Kawasaki has had James for a long time and James is their guy and he's obviously the favourite to win next year and that. I guess I just didn't want to go into a team feeling that I'm just sort of a back-up guy."

DBR: If your plan holds true and you make it through supercross nice and strong and head outdoors you have to figure to be a factor there...

GL: "I'd like to think so. I know Ricky will be at a lot of the races but, when you look at the big picture, if he's not racing all of them like he says it makes James the favourite and when James gets confident he's tough to beat. With him, whether it's me or Carmichael or Ferry or anyone who has had some success outdoors, we can't let him get into a zone because he's unstoppable like he was on 125s."

"My plan is to be maybe a little fitter and maybe a little smarter than I've been in the past to be more consistent. But, like I said, once he goes to the starting line knowing he's going to win I think it's going to be a big uphill battle."

DBR: "So how do you handle that mentally as a racer, knowing if the guy gets going you can't stop him?"

GL: "You can't worry about what everyone else is doing. You train as hard as you can, you work on your weaknesses, you practice, you test, you do everything and when you go to the line if you get second you're the second-best rider out there and you've done whatever you can."

"This year the 450s are going to be very competitive. You've got your big three, Windham back from injury, Ferry back on a factory bike, myself, Ramsey, Millsaps and Short and Preston, Wey, Vuillemin, Tedesco. There are over 10 riders that can and should be up front. If you have a good day you could be on the box and if you have a sort of off day you could be 11th. There's a lot of good riders this year and I'm just going to do my thing and if it's sixth place it's sixth and if it's fifth even better."

"It's going to be good, we're working on the bike every day and I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be pretty exciting for everyone."



REASON FOR RACING!

If the pit pundits are to be believed there's no point staging any racing in Canada as the wins are already in James Stewart's back pocket – ha, what do they know?

Before the World SX opener in Toronto most pit pundits reckon the races in Canada are just a formality – Kawasaki's James Stewart's going to win. All that's up for debate is how much he'll win by and who'll get second.

But, as they say, there's a reason why the races are run. After acquainting themselves with the new timed qualifying format during practice and the new qualifying races without Semis, the riders line up for the first Main Event of the season inside Rogers Centre and prepare for 20 laps around a difficult track.

At the drop of the gate it's Nick Wey leading Ricky Carmichael and Chad Reed while Stewart runs near the tail of the top five. Reed makes several attempts to pass Carmichael and finally makes one stick just after the finish of lap one. RC then attempts to dive underneath both Reed and Wey going into turn one, clips his left handlebar on a Tuff Block and goes down.

Reed makes his way by Wey immediately after and then sets sail out front as Wey sits second and Stewart tries to get around team-mate Timmy Ferry for third. Stewart eventually gets around both Ferry and Wey and then sets out after Reed.

"I didn't see Ricky fall and I never knew he was down," Reed says. "I was putting in some good laps trying to break away from Ricky and you can hear Ricky when he's behind you. He's just hammering the throttle and the clutch and I wasn't hearing any of that so I took a peek and noticed he wasn't there and tried to get my lines down and be smooth."

The chase is on! Stewart's within a couple of seconds of Reed by the halfway point and the battle really comes together before lap 15 as Stewart starts pushing Reed and makes his first aggressive pass by Reed two turns before the finish. The battle ensues for a couple of laps as the two go back and forth.

"When he passed me I just wanted to put myself right back in the battle and not let him ride away from me and I think that was the difference," Reed says. "We were in the middle of it with like four laps to go, there was a lot of traffic. Every time he passed me I just tried to stick it back up the inside and not let him go."

As the pair head up the finish line jump Stewart slows up on the face and Reed hits him from behind, sending Stewart off the side of the track and forcing Reed to single the finish double.

Reed reassumes the lead and Stewart jumps quickly back onto the track right into the path of Travis Preston who's running sixth and has just been lapped. Preston's airborne and has nowhere to go so centre-punches Stewart and sends them both to the ground. Stewart remounts quickly but Preston's out of the race.

As Stewart attempts to finish out the last three laps of the race with an injured right leg he falls into the



James Stewart leads Ricky Carmichael at Anaheim I



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Speedy Reedy starts with a win but is now playing catch-up

grasp of Carmichael and, given the circumstances, Stewart doesn't have much for him.

After the finish Stewart collapses from the pain of his injured right leg and is confronted while he's on the ground by Preston who's not happy with the way Stewart re-entered the race right in front of him. Ferry ends up a strong fourth, just in front of David Vuillemin and Wey.

On to round two in Vancouver and many are surprised that Stewart's even racing after his crash with Preston in Toronto. Stewart's right foot and ankle are so badly bruised and swollen that he wears two different boots during Saturday's first practice session and sits out the second.

Stewart makes his life easier – or harder, depending on how you look at it – with a holeshot in the Main Event. "I ended up pulling the holeshot and it was on," Stewart says. "I thought I could've made it easier on myself and just hung out in the back but I'm going after a championship and I knew that once me and Ricky got together you could put the foot behind my back and we could race from then on."

Carmichael starts third and makes quick work of Michael Byrne for second and that's when the chase begins. "It was a race all 20 laps and I was trying," Carmichael says. "I lost a little tow here and there and had to make it back up and he was strong from lap five to about lap 13 or 14. He was in there."

Stewart looks like he isn't even injured out front until he over-jumps a section and hurts his bad foot. "I think it was about lap 12 that I overjumped and hit my ankle

pretty good and that was almost the end of the story right there."

Carmichael knows his chance for a pass is coming so he sticks close to Stewart until the opportunity presents itself. "I didn't hold up at all the whole time I was behind him," Carmichael says. "I wasn't going to drive it in on him. I was going to wait for the perfect opportunity. Obviously, if it was the last lap I would've had to be a little more aggressive but I didn't have to wait for the last lap."

"We're going so fast that you almost have to wait for a mistake because it's almost impossible to pass him going that fast. You just have to follow him and wait for that one slip-up and when that one slip-up happens you have to be ready to pounce otherwise you've missed your opportunity."

Carmichael immediately puts some distance on Stewart. "Once he got by me, I made a mistake and the race was over," Stewart says. "He was gone with two laps to go."

So Carmichael goes on to take his first win of the season, showing that even on a part-time basis he's going to be a threat every time he hits the race track. "It was an epic battle, for sure," Carmichael says. "It's so much fun to race like that. I've grown to have a lot of respect for him just racing last year and he's grown up a lot racing with me."

After a so-so start Chad Reed makes his way to third quickly but the Toronto winner knows he doesn't have anything for the top two in Vancouver. "I just



God bless America



Tyler Evans fans!



Travis Preston – he's not Stewart's biggest fan



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SERIES STANDINGS

Supercross

1 James Stewart	122 points
2 Chad Reed	104
3 Tim Ferry	90
4 Michael Byrne	73
5 Ricky Carmichael	69
6 Kevin Windham	66
7 Nick Wey	60
8 Travis Preston	60
9 Heath Voss	55
10 Ivan Tedesco	53

Ricky Carmichael – not bad for a part-timer!

Nick Wey takes three holeshots but only gets a cheque for one...



Just when all signs point to a James Stewart runaway in the AMP'D Mobile/AMA SX series, up pops the promise of more hard racing in the coming weeks. After dominating Anaheim I – round one of the series – Monster Energy Kawasaki's Stewart heads into round two in Phoenix with the knowledge that Makita Suzuki's Ricky Carmichael has won in that venue the last two years.

"Phoenix is special to me," Carmichael says. "Obviously, family's from here and I got my first 250cc podium here in 2000 so that's very special because I'd worked so hard to get that and it finally came. I like everything about it, kind of like how I like Atlanta – you just walk in there and the smell and the surroundings, you just feel so good. This is a great venue."

With San Manuel Yamaha's Chad Reed still on the mend from his crash before A1, most assume it will be either Carmichael or Stewart on top of the box by the end of the night. Xyience/MDK Honda's Nick Wey grabs the holeshot with Stewart right behind and Reed and RC mired in the pack but the race is quickly red-flagged when Wey's team-mate David Vuillemin crashes.

On the restart Stewart's team-mate Timmy Ferry looks to have the holeshot, only for Jeff Dement to steal it from the outside. Carmichael goes immediately into the lead and only a few turns later Stewart grabs second and Reed grabs third.

On lap eight, Stewart makes his move. "I just felt like the lines I was running in practice and the heat race just weren't working and it was as simple as that," Stewart says. "I knew I had to pick it up somewhere, otherwise he was just going to run away from me. I saw a few places that I thought I could make up time and I went back and looked around to see where I could make up a little more time."

For the next 12 laps Stewart leads Carmichael and Reed and grabs his second win in a row, although barely over a second in front of Carmichael who obviously isn't happy to miss out on the top step of the podium. "I'm always bummed [when I lose]," Carmichael says. "That's just the competitive nature in me. But the guy's riding good. You can't discount that. We're really close. Dang, it's just that I really felt that I was faster everywhere except the turn before the second set of whoops and that finish line and I'm anxious to see it on film because I felt solid everywhere else."

"It just seemed like he was turning exceptionally well there and it's just frustrating. I know we're better than that. Suzuki's been working really hard and our engine is simply amazing this year. Ian and Roger and everybody at the shop have been working exceptionally hard and we've got a great package. We just need to be a touch better. I'm actually looking forward to having a little bit more time and being able to perfect that thing."

The series heads back to Anaheim for the second time a week later and there is already talk of the perfect season for Stewart – especially since Carmichael's sitting out Anaheim II and most of the remaining supercrosses.

"I already went perfect in the heat races [in 2006] so I don't really care to do that anymore and I'm not looking forward to being perfect in all the supercrosses," Stewart says. "The only goal I have is to put myself in the best position to win the championship. I don't care about winning races here and there, I want to be there for the end. As long as I keep doing the work that I do during the week I'll be fine. I think it's helping me out a lot that I see where I want to be at and I know when the Main Event comes I feel super-strong."

Wey gets revenge on his lost Phoenix holeshot as he claims the \$1500 prize at the start of the Main. Stewart goes by Wey quickly and then gets out to a large lead right away. Reed eventually makes his way into second and Wey hangs out in third for the rest of the race. The podium is set.

"I knew that James was gone and I just tried to pick Nick off and put some smooth laps together," Reed says. "It was exciting to have a new guy on the podium and I'm super-pumped for Nick. Nick's a great guy and he has good people behind him to make that happen. There are a lot of factory guys out there that he beat so I'm pumped for him."

However, Wey's podium is taken from him the day

INVASION!

The 2006 AMCA championship saw a big injection of ACU talent – but the newcomers didn't have it all their own way...

Words and photos by Mike Wood

RAISING THE bar in the battle for AMCA championship honours, Phil Mercer, Paul Coward, Richard-Mike Jones, Mark Hooley and Nigel Kibble all decided to shift from the ACU ranks and challenge the established AMCA stars in 2006.

For Mercer in particular this was a big move after having tasted GP action and been a regular ACU British championship runner. With backing from DK Offroad Motorcycles, Phil also switched classes for 2006 and competed on Open class machinery – and his speed and vast experience paid off as he ended the season on top, finishing 11 points ahead of young gun Elliot Barrs.

Over in the 125cc class Hooley also had a fantastic debut season and was the main contender for the crown helped by podium finishes at the first six rounds. But his hopes were dashed by a knee injury sustained during the penultimate round at Culham. So with the unfortunate Yorkshireman out, it was reigning champ Brad O'Leary who was to claim crown number two despite a winter switch from Honda to KTM machinery.

Sand was on the menu for the opening two rounds of the title chase and it was a couple of established AMCA stars returning from injury who were to be the early leaders.

On Easter Sunday at Hawkstone Park Rob Clitheroe scorched to a brilliant MX2 maximum after missing a large chunk of 2005 due to a major wrist operation. Up in the highly entertaining MX1 division it was Charlie Hollis – fully recovered from a badly broken leg – who came out on top.

Hooley actually led the opening MX2 moto of the season before Clitheroe came through to win by a whopping 13 seconds with O'Leary, Lee Payne, Clinton Barrs, Rick Du-Feu and Jamie Powell in the frame. A renowned sand expert, Clitheroe then stormed to victory in the remaining two MX2 motos to open his 2006 account in style. The podium was completed by O'Leary on his new FotoX/AMS KTM and Servo Racing KTM pilot Hooley.

In MX1 Paul Burn was the Hawkstone holeshot king although the opening moto victory went to Hollis, despite stalling his Honda in the closing stages. Charlie also took the moto two victory but he was to taste his first championship defeat of the season in the final clash. Burn, Richard-Mike Jones, Danny Blakeley and finally Mercer all took turns to lead that last moto with the eventual victory going to 'Factory' Phil on his beloved 250cc two-stroke Kawasaki. That last race win gave Mercer second overall ahead of Blakeley.

Onto Matchams and the two-stroke 250cc boys ruled the roost as Mercer (twice) and Blakeley took the race victories. Barrs on his Wildmoor/Wulfspport Yamaha also enjoyed the deep Hampshire sand to earn second overall behind Mercer with Rich-Mike Jones fourth and Blakeley sixth. Best 450F finishers at Matchams



James Shaw is hounded by Hooley and Barrs



The 125cc class gets out the gate with Mark Hooley reacting ahead of Lee Dunham, Clinton Barrs and Tom Fish



were Hollis in third and Aaron Crowder fifth. Ride of the day in MX1 definitely belonged to Mercer. Last into turn one in the opening moto, he passed the entire field for an epic win.

Over in MX2 Clitheroe maintained his series lead with a brace of moto wins although he also suffered his first major engine problem of the season when his Honda dropped a valve in the early stages of race two. Hooley took full advantage for the win to trail the series leader by just two points with O'Leary a further five points behind in third. Overall victory went to Rick Du-Feu with a 2-2-3 scorecard.

After the sand of Hawkstone and Matchams came the hard-pack of Topcliffe in Yorkshire for round three. Hooley scorched to a brilliant hat-trick of MX2 wins to soar to the top of the championship table and lead the way by a healthy 20 points. Not enjoying the fast, flat-out terrain, Clitheroe could only manage a disappointing 10th overall with 29 points which dropped him behind O'Leary and Du-Feu in the title chase. While Clitheroe endured a Yorkshire

nightmare, James Lane earned the final MX2 podium place on the day with what was to be his best result of the season.

Despite their strong start to the season aboard strokers, Mercer, Barrs and Rich-Mike all arrived at Topcliffe ready to do MX1 battle armed with 450Fs. Although he recorded the fastest qualifying time, Mercer was left regretting the switch when he was forced to push his mount over the finish line for 16th in moto one after falling on the final turn and was unable to fire the big Kawasaki motor back into life. With Jones also not enjoying his own 450F debut, Hollis, Barrs and impressive 250cc two-stroke pilot Danny Ayres took the wins. Ayres earned the last MX1 podium place at Topcliffe behind winner Barrs and reigning AMCA champion Simon Lane.

With temperatures touching 30 degrees, Louth MCC – organisers of round four – lost their battle to control rising dust clouds and with riders' safety of paramount importance the meeting was abandoned after just one race. In

the one Open class contest held, debutant Jamie Powell – a top 125cc rider for several seasons – led the way for three laps. Eventually Blakeley moved through for the win with Barrs second and Burn third. Despite both suffering cuts from flying stones on the Caister circuit, Hollis and Mercer were the next best finishers.

The championship chase then moved onto Woodford, near Corby. This meeting was to see Mercer lose his championship lead for the first time as Barrs secured the overall win on the day to head the title hunt by just a single point. Barrs (twice) and Lane were the moto winners on the day. But while Barrs was celebrating, the unlucky Hollis was facing another lengthy spell on the sidelines after breaking his shoulder following a heavy crash as the pack raced towards the opening turn of moto two.

In the 125cc class a very fast Hooley was again in great form and increased his championship advantage to 32 points. Clinton Barrs and fast-starting O'Leary were the closest challengers on the day with Barrs even



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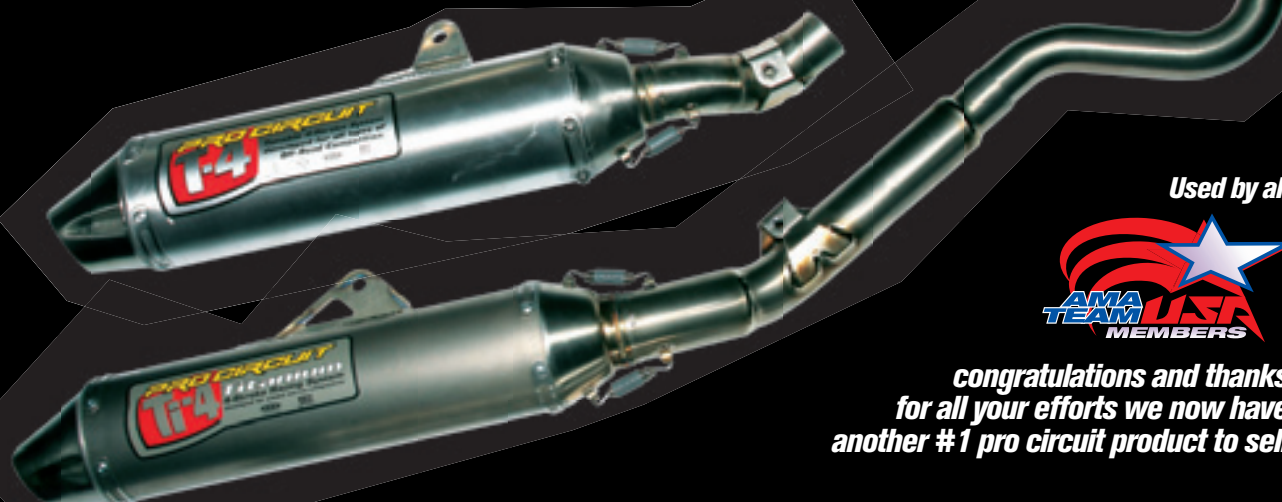
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taking the final moto win. Clitheroe had a disastrous day as another dropped valve ruined his chances – and prompted his departure from Honda.

Now armed with a One11MX KTM, Clitheroe blasted to the final 125cc moto win at Norley in Cheshire. Hooley – campaigning a '07 KTM – and Barrs were again well on the gas but O'Leary also pulled out a strong performance to keep his own title hopes still very much alive.

Producing the ride of the day in moto three, the FotoX/AMS KTM racer moved from well outside the top 10 to earn a brilliant second at the flag, passing title rival Hooley with just two laps remaining.

Going into the sixth round just one point separated Barrs and Mercer in the battle for the Open class crown. Remarkably, after another three hotly contested races, the Open championship table was still telling the same

story with Barrs in control by just that same solitary point. Showing his best form of the season so far, Jones took the overall win on the day, sharing the moto wins on the sandy circuit with Barrs and long jump king Jason Rennie.

After losing his championship lead for two rounds, Mercer surged back to the top of the Open class title race with a storming performance at Walterstone. Recording a 1-3-3 scorecard, Phil also took the overall win on the day from a very consistent Aaron Crowder with Barrs crucially in third ahead of Lane and Burn.

Star performer though on the fast Herefordshire circuit was without doubt reigning 125cc champion O'Leary. Producing a stunning performance to win all three motos, Brad was now just 17 points behind leader Hooley with six motos and two rounds still remaining. Although Hooley went on to earn second overall, his meeting did not start well after he fell in the second turn of moto one. Restarting last, he moved all the way through to a brilliant sixth at the flag. In a rich vein of form, Clinton Barrs was again on the podium in the 125cc class with third overall, just ahead of Lee Dunham who enjoyed his strongest performance of the season in fourth.

Travelling to the penultimate championship round, O'Leary was now within striking distance of 125cc leader Hooley. But on a very wet October day at Culham, Hooley – already in agony from two broken ribs sustained at Walterstone – then suffered a painful knee injury when his leg slipped off the footpeg



Hooley leads again



'Factory' Phil Mercer wins the 2006 Open class title



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on landing from a jump during moto two. With Hooley now out of contention, O'Leary recorded a very strong 1-1-2 scorecard and moved into control of the championship race by 35 points. Clitheroe took second place on the podium ahead of Du-Feu and Richard Cannings.

Despite being sidelined since early August, Charlie Hollis returned with a bang to record a start-to-finish win in the first Open class moto at Culham. With axle-deep, energy-sapping ruts being formed all around the circuit, Hollis didn't have the race fitness to produce a repeat of that moto one win. Enter Rich-Mike Jones who expertly steered his ER Williams Honda to victories in motos two and three to earn the overall ahead of Simon Lane and David Wright, son of famous CCM rider Bob Wright.

The Open class saw Mercer extend his series lead to 26 points thanks to fourth overall, three places ahead of Barrs.

The championships were supposed to be decided at the AMCA's own track at Nympsfield. But with the unfortunate Hooley a non-starter thanks to cruciate ligament damage sustained at Culham, it meant that a delighted Brad O'Leary had retained his 125cc crown. Typically he was still very much on the gas at Nympsfield and blasted to a brilliant hat-trick of moto wins. Although not competing, the gallant Hooley was still assured of the silver medal in the 125cc class although the battle for the bronze was far more complicated.

Just 20 points separated Du-Feu, Clitheroe and Clinton Barrs. With Du-Feu suffering terminal engine problems in practice, the odds looked

heavily stacked against the 2005 runner-up again finishing in the medal positions. But despite being on his spare machine, Du-Feu used his vast experience to maximum benefit and earn third overall on the day behind Dunham, good enough for the bronze medal.

With the Open class riders having had one moto at the abandoned meeting at Caister in July it meant they were allowed just two outings

at Nympsfield to take them to the 24-race total for the series. Defending a 26-point championship lead, Mercer rode carefully to safeguard that advantage and earn his first ever AMCA title with a 3-6 scorecard. Doing his best to take the title challenge right to the wire, Elliot Barrs won both motos at Nympsfield for the overall on the day ahead of Richard-Mike Jones and Aaron Crowder.



Rich-Mike Jones
takes the overall in
the slop at Culham



**Scott Mathia and
Clinton Barrs head
for the Hawkstone
whoops**



**Elliot Barrs comes
close to the Open
class crown**

Final standings

125cc

1	Brad O'Leary	(FotoX/AMS KTM)	522
2	Mark Hooley	(Servo Racing KTM)	412
3	Rick Du-Feu	(DK Offroad Honda)	399
4	Rob Clitheroe	(One11MX KTM)	385
5	Clinton Barrs	(Wildmoor/Wulfspport Yamaha)	368
6	Lee Dunham	(Molson Team Green Kawasaki)	326
7	James Lane	(Honda Equipe)	292
8	Scott Mathia	(Wulfspport Honda)	245
9	Lee Payne	(Honda)	241
10	Alan Pearce	(Honda)	201

Open class

1	Phil Mercer	(DK Offroad Kawasaki)	462
2	Elliot Barrs	(Wildmoor/Wulfspport Yamaha)	451
3	Simon Lane	(Honda Equipe)	396
4	Aaron Crowder	(Sandifords Honda)	372
5	Richard-Mike Jones	(ER Williams Honda)	354
6	Danny Blakeley	(Silvesters Yamaha)	327
7	Paul Burn	(Drilltec Honda)	286
8	Charlie Hollis	(Invek Foods Honda)	285
9	David Wright	(Sandifords Honda)	251
10	Paul Coward	(Honda)	228

HEART AND SOUL!

If pure passion rather than hard cash guaranteed a ride with a GP team then Scotty Columb would be sure of a start at Valkenswaard on April 1 – but even without a rich benefactor the super-keen Kiwi might just make it

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson



EUROPE HAS not been short on class Kiwis for the last 15 years. First came the Kings, we had the pleasure of BT's company for four years before he sped off Stateside and as we enter 2007 Josh Coppins is the favourite for the premier world crown.

So who's in line as the next Kiwi? How about Scotty Columb, the boy from Queenstown – "the adventure capital of the world!" The what? "Yeah, it's about three hours drive south of Dunedin, right on the tip of the South Island. Head out in the wrong direction and the next place you see is the Antarctic. It's where AJ Hackett bungy jumping originated in 1989 and there are over 160 sporting activities from

bungy jumping to rafting, motorcycle rides, flying foxes, sky diving. All the craziest sports in the world and I could do them all right there in my hometown.

"My parents own a two and four-wheel motorcycle business and also offer the Rings Tours. We were right in it. I took Orlando Bloom and Elijah Wood out on quads when they were filming and that's what I do when I go home, working as a tour guide for my parents."

But the weather works against year-round racing. "You do get a few cold blasts and it can be quite dangerous when you're in the mountains trail riding. You have to be prepared for the worst, it can change from sunshine to

blizzard in a matter of minutes and if you're not prepared right you can die out there. In the summer it's about 30 degrees, in the winter minus 5, minus 15."

Daft question but what got you into motocross then Scotty? "Well, I have to admit that motocross was not my sole direction in life when I was a teenager. I've always been into sports. I was South Island giant slalom snowboarding champion and I've also played for two South Island rugby teams – the Under 45s and 58kgs.

"But South Island is a lot more laidback, nobody gets stuck in a routine and I tried a lot of sports before I decided that I wanted to



Scotty got some GP time in last season for Rob Hooper's Maximum Solutions Suzuki team

pursue motocross as a career. Why? Because it's the best!

"I started trail riding when I was three and I had my first race when I was 11 but I was 18 before I started to make a full run at motocross. The main competition and races are on the North Island so I moved there and was living at Tokara, about 45 minutes from Taupo.

"I still worked a couple of days a week with the forestry commission. We have what are called ponga logs, which weigh between 30 and 90kg. Another guy would go round and chop them down into eight feet long logs and I had to carry them to

the skidder, the bulldozer. That was my strength training."

So what beamed you up to Europe, Scotty? "I wanted to race GPs. I finished second in the NZ MX2 championship to Cody Cooper, I had been third the year before, fourth the year before that and fifth so I was improving all the way, just like Josh did. I guess it's a South Island thing to do it like that. I haven't been a Ben Townley or Cody Cooper or Luke Burkhart, the guys who have suddenly jumped to the front at a young age."

At 23 Scotty is no longer a teenage prospect but that doesn't worry him.

"I could have gone to Australia and earned more money but Europe is the heart of motocross and I would rather be a better rider than just make money. I rode for Rob Hooper for a couple of months at the end of 2005, then a friend who had been riding the German SX got in touch with Oskar Ziemer, a manager over there. I sent my CV and he put me in touch with the Czech guys at the Delta team. They offered me the air ticket over here and a trial in Italy.

"I flew there in February straight after the NZ SX season. The tracks were frozen and they hired me after a few races so I ended up racing Czech championship and some GPs. There were some ups and downs but it was an awesome year.

"I've progressed a lot from my first races. I can see that from my riding and my results. I was leading the race at the next to last round in Czecho when I blew the rear brake and in the second moto I was battling for the lead when my header pipe broke so I was out of the championship. The team was changing direction anyway for 2006 and they let me sit out the final round to race at Ernee."

And in a heavy schedule Scotty even managed some rides in the UK. "I race wherever I can for the love of racing. The best practice you can do is to race, Rob Hooper still helps me out and I can just jump in the truck with Josh or Molson and go racing."

And the closeness is not just Kiwi fraternity. "I live with Josh in BT's old room, I ride BT's old push bike and I'm just so lucky to have those guys as friends. If I had to come over to Europe without them it would have been very difficult but Kiwis stick together.

"I knew Ben from when we raced together back home and I knew Josh briefly because I did a couple of training days and got coached by him when I was 16. And when I'm in NZ I ride for Murray Thorn Suzuki and he was the guy who brought Josh over to Europe. I have to cook, clean, everything. I even hurt my thumb when I was bored one day and scrubbed the bathtub. It hasn't really worked for me yet



His first GP points came at Namur

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but I hope the speed from that room rubs off in the end."

The GPs weren't easy – the GPs are not easy – but the improvement was there to see and at the fifth attempt Scotty joined the scorers. "Namur was tough. I've never sweated so much in my life, my goggles were steaming up. It was so hard to race, so long, so rough and when you do something wrong you're headed for a tree. She was special. I really enjoyed it but it was tough so I was happy to score my first points there.

"I'd rather be banging bars with people but you can't do that round there. I just kept going, other people were crashing and I got points. And I also had my best qualification there. We don't do one lap qualifying in NZ so it's not easy. Josh will give me a tow if he gets the chance so I just try to stay with him as long as possible."

One of the biggest disappointments was his DNQ in at Delta's home base. "I was 19th in the first training at Loket – my best yet – but I was racing to the wrong place. I had been there for a Czech championship and the finish line was the house with the chequered flag on the wall above the start straight. I didn't know where the beam actually was until Josh saw me back off and put me straight.



"I so wanted to have my best quali there but I pushed too hard and that meant I was hitting everything hard. I was missing my braking points, missing the ruts and did nothing right. I actually slowed myself down and was first reserve. That was a learning experience."

So where does he go from here? "I think I have a lot of motivation, I train hard and I have a big heart. I never stop trying. I'm just hoping I can organise something for 2007. The first thing I need is a bike which goes into third gear. The Czech team was not easy. It was a major disadvantage to be racing against bikes which are stripped down every week – the mechanics didn't speak English and we had big problems with gear selection. I just hope someone sees that I have potential and gives me a chance."

"I think there are a lot of teams where you can get a ride if you can bring some money. I was talking to Smets' team but they are going with the Swede Marcus Norlen – he can bring money with him. I don't have that, I just have a big heart."

Back in October Scotty returned to NZ – "I had to go work for my dad, pay him back for budgeting me for this trip" – then it was the Taupo international and the ISDE where he was on the NZ Trophy team.

Last week Scotty got in touch again.

"Hodge, what's up? I have been training and living with Josh since the start of December which is going good. Through January I will be doing some NZ races, then hopefully something will arise. I want to come back to Europe and race the MX1 world championship but I don't have a ride. But I'm still hoping I can find something or something finds me, Europe is the place to be."

"I'd go to America like that if I could get a ride because I'll ride anywhere but I know the standard of motocross in Europe is better than America – not RC or Bubba but behind them Europe is stronger. Perhaps I could ride for an English team and sneak off on the odd off weekend for the GPs – I'll go with anyone just to race GPs. They are so awesome."

Anyone listening? The address is scottcolumb104@hotmail.com if you are...

And if nothing else comes up? "We joke about this, me, Josh and his cousin Jamie – we're going to call it JCR Racing and it will operate out of the back of Josh's motorhome. Just buy a couple of bikes, buy some suspension and do it NZ style. I'm determined to come back and if that's the way I have to do it so be it. I'd like to think I could be the next Kiwi and, with a little bit of help, I'll give it everything I can to achieve just that!"



Max gets some words of encouragement from Merv on the startline at Bercy



LIKE FATHER...

...like son! He was that rarest of racers – a privateer who actually won a GP – and now Mervyn Anstie's son Max looks to be picking up where dad left off

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson





Merv gets the holeshot at the '94 Austrian 500 GP

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Leading Joel Smets back in 1993

IT'S REMARKABLE how many budding stars have a family background in motocross. First it was the brothers – Rickman, Sharp, Geboers, King – then the offspring – Nicoll, Banks, Crockard, Nunn. And now, right at the forefront of the latest generation of kids, we've got Max – son of Mervyn – Anstie!

Still just 13, Max is a couple of years from the adult stage but has already made his mark and secured a ride for life at Bercy.

"Who says English kids can't race supercross. I saw him already at Sheffield. Is he good or what?" And that unsolicited praise comes from none other than David Vuillemin, one of Europe's most successful supercrossers of all time!

Youth SX is nothing new in the UK and even Bercy has dabbled in demos over the years but this winter's 85cc class in Paris was for real, racing the full track of what even hardened veterans rated as the toughest track in Europe – if not the world – for 15 years.

Not even promoters Lariviere dreamt that their new sideshow would wow the fervent crowd the way it did – they didn't even have a trophy waiting for the winner on the first night – but already by Saturday evening the kids had been promoted on the billing. And there was a trophy waiting for Max as he slayed his French elders for the second straight night.

And the way he took the wins didn't even upset the usually partisan crowd. "If you jump on the yellow flag in

England or Holland you get disqualified so I rolled the double and was sure the French boy would do too but then suddenly he was whistling past my ear and I thought 'oh no'."

Just a lap to go but did his head go down? No way! Max surged back past through the whoops and sailed past lappers through the combination. "I wasn't going to give him another chance!"

The crowd loved it but what they loved even more was the way Max nattered on the podium. Okay, half the crowd couldn't understand half of what le petit Anglais was saying but, used to Yanks thanking God and French kids who can hardly open their mouths, they lapped it up. And announcer Francis Magnanou and his young lady assistant were in stitches as Max grabbed the microphone.

Back in the pits, Max was just as chirpy. "There was never any question that I would ride motocross. I mean, I was seeing it every day but nobody needed to twist my arm. We put a lot of hard work in but we do it for fun as well. I obviously can't remember my dad racing GPs – I was only one when he won that GP – but I've seen pictures of him and I want to travel all over the world like he did. He's got lots of stories. One he tells, I don't know where it was but the

caravan fell off on the motorway. It's not just about racing.

"We've been going to America since I was about 10. We went to the world minis and since then we've been every year. For sure that helps me with the supercross. The American tracks are a lot different to anything you ride over here, a lot of big jumps. And if they think Bercy is tough they should come to our track."

It was in the mid '80s that dad Mervyn hit the headlines. "It was tough," admits Merv. "We didn't have any family contacts. My dad never raced, I was first in with my brother John. I made a few mistakes but we got through and had fun. Trouble was I always ranked third to Thorpey and Kurt Nicoll, even though I beat them quite often. But my funds were completely different to what they had.

"I got on well with Graham Noyce. He was the one who pushed me into riding the GPs. Back in 1984 I won the British Support championship and all that year I would drive the two hours down to his house to go running and do gym work with him every Wednesday. Graham saw my commitment and it was him who told me I was doing the GPs in '85.

"I can remember watching the '84 GP at Hawkstone, thinking to myself I would never go as fast as those guys. I was doing well in the supports but that was a different world. But the next year I was with them. I remember setting off to Austria with 300 quid from my dad. That just about got me there but if I hadn't qualified I don't know how I'd have got home. But it was literally from that day on I was bitten and I had to carry on. Graham wouldn't let me go with him. I could follow him but we had to go separately. It was a long old drive down there at 18 but that was when it all started."

It was nine years later that the eternal privateer finally kicked factory arse to score his only GP win at Sverepec in Slovakia. "Oh yes, lovely time. I had some great days but that has to be the best. That was the first GP I won, indeed the only one. There was a lot of heartache over the years but those good days made it all worthwhile.

"A couple of the big names dropped out of the second moto but they were all there in the first moto and I beat them. It was all politics anyway. I can't remember which one it was now but



Three generations of Anstie snapped at Bercy



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in the first moto I lapped either Jacky Martens or Joel Smets. Not bad with flat tyres back and front in both races. It was quite amazing really. It was a bit scary but I was still doing the uphill double."

And then the grin widens yet further. "Some people would stop with two flat tyres but I never stopped unless I went straight through the fence with an HRC Honda bolted on top of me! I had a lot of memorable times with David too."

Mervyn's face never fitted with the factories

back then and that jest was at the expense of David Thorpe, a reference to Merv's British GP debut at Farleigh in 1985 when he ended up in the fence at turn one with the champion-to-be who then produced the most legendary ride of his career to race from last to first in 16 minutes!

Mervyn was always something of an outsider and would prep his gate with a Walkman plugged in his ears. Music to soothe the forthcoming stress? No way, it was a

personalised tape from an American shrink, building his self-belief by telling Merv how good he was! And it worked! How many times did the privateer out-gate the factory weapons and give them the runaround for a few laps? And remember, those were the days when what you bought bore little resemblance to the factory hardware.

Not that Merv was always alone. "I started quite a few young British lads in the GPs. It was a struggle to pay for everything so I used to

Ex Pats!

Riding away from home...

The Ansties hardly rode in Britain last year. "We only did the British youth series one year but I do feel they make it hard work for the kids and I do find it hard to sit and watch," explains Merv. "You can't help them with this, you can't go to the startline with them and, like, they're eight years old. You can't go on the track, it's just hard work, whereas you go to the Dutch championship and it's not like that. Nice circuits, you don't have to run the events for them, marshalling and all that. Just laidback, how it should be.

"I've spoken to the ACU guys and they are trying. I suggested they go and look how they do it in other countries. I ask every year because we'd love to come back but it seems to be all upside down again next year. We do a few local races at home, have a bit of fun but we've got a pretty heavy schedule anyway with the Dutch and European plus a few races in America. We didn't have a weekend off from April to July.

"We even went to Turkey in 2005. We're taking it a step at a time – we weren't doing the full European series and it was a bit far. This year we're going to try to do all of them but it's a hefty series. What with school and work, it's difficult to fit it all in. I'm running the school at home to pay for it all and fortunately we found Rabbit Racing and they bring the bike to the races but we still have to drive over from home every weekend. The old van's got a lot of miles on it now!"

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offer them the chance to come with me and share expenses. Marshy started like that, Leigh Williams, Jason Higgs. James and Higgsy came with me to Finland once."

And the kids were quivering in their boots at times. "I had to teach those young lads a bit of discipline as well. Up at five in the morning lined up in front of the van with the brushes and the mops to start cleaning up. There was more of them but they never answered back. They couldn't, they were 40 hours adrift from England and it was my van! We did have some wonderful times."

And is it the same with his own boy? Not according to Max. "Everyone tells me how angry my dad used to be but I've never known him like that." At this point Merv jumps in to defend himself. "It was all for their own good. I was the victim of vicious rumours, people just picking on me. We had to be sergeant major sometimes but I'm very calm and placid nowadays."

"Actually, I saw Pierrot Schlegers of Schlechten Pipes for the first time in years at Joel Smets' party and some other people we know from the youth scene came over and started telling him I was so calm and relaxed, a nice guy. Pierrot just looked and laughed."

And how is life as schoolboy dad? "I get a lot of pleasure from being involved, we work hard,

the school's great and I can honestly say that I'm enjoying every day, even

though it's now getting tough because Max goes faster than me!

"The skill level is brilliant and I have to watch myself. We were doing some practice for the supercross and I build a lot of the stuff at home myself. I built some whoops and I was upside down on them a couple of weeks ago so I'm a bit more careful now."

"But I do enjoy training the youngsters. We've got a good academy going in England and we've set up schools for them in America too now. They fly over from Europe, I've got bikes over there and some land at Temecula in California. We'll be heading out there for a few months after this. We're very lucky that Max's school is very supportive. And the school work is going great, Max has top grades in everything and they help a lot with work in his core areas. They've been brilliant."

As Max has progressed and the racing has become more serious, the Anstie's have benefited from brilliant back-up from Kawasaki UK. Now, as he prepares to take on the next challenge, Team Green are still firmly behind him.

"We've worked with Steve Guttridge since Max was eight. I told Steve that Max was getting towards the age where he'll want to be racing the European championship and we need to develop the bike and let Max see different tracks so he has put a European package together for us which will help us even more next year. Kawasaki are making a big effort and it obviously costs a lot of money but we're having fun and they obviously think it's worthwhile."

"Up until now the

standard bike's been great but you need to be prepared for racing the fast tracks abroad and the sand. I feel that the sand programme is very important and it's important to learn it early. You need to feel at home with the sand. It's tough but it makes you a better rider. And this was Max's first year on the big wheels, I'm very pleased how well it's gone."

"I met these people from Rabbit Racing last winter and we got on really well, I was impressed with their work. The owner Rob Damen has a tuning business and we've made a good step forward with them."

"At the end of the day we're still in the youth but we're trying to build the programme how it should be for the future - not just the bike but the physical training and school too. If it's all in place, everything becomes much easier."

And Max is lapping it up too. "I'm not making any plans yet. We'll see when I'm older but I'd like to do the GPs and I'd like to do the Americans. We'll see. I've got no regrets going to Holland this year. Rabbit Racing are a great team and I don't think I'm missing anything in England. There is a plan of development but we'll take one step at a time, not forcing it. In the end it's what I want to do really and if I feel I'm not ready then I'll say so."



British GP action from Farleigh and, left, topping the podium in Slovakia



BEAT IT!

Understanding how your heart works – and how you can improve its function – is vital if you want to drop your lap times...

Words by Alan Milway

'IT'S ALL about heart.' We've all heard the phrase and on most occasions it's meant as drive to achieve. However, the most important aspect of any rider's preparation is how developed and trained their heart is.

When we perform any exercise that requires effort and is over a very short distance or burst our heart rate rises. Whether it is in response to previous exercise and is beating faster to rid the body of a build up of lactic acid or it is to sustain exercise at a hard effort, the heart is our most important muscle.

What is often forgotten is that the heart is actually a muscle and as such will benefit from training to improve and strengthen it. It is different to muscles in the arms and legs in its function, make up and that it does not fatigue as skeletal muscle does. But you need to understand that training improves its function and this will help us improve performance.

The heart is made up of two distinct sides and four chambers. The right side of the heart deals with blood that has been used and is low in oxygen. It is then pumped to the lungs to be re-oxygenated and when it returns to the left side of the heart it is then pumped around the body to the working muscles to supply required oxygen.

As exercise intensity and duration increases there is a greater demand for oxygen from the muscles. This demand is met by the heart beating faster and with bigger 'pumps'. Each pump sends more blood out so a combination of a greater pump (called stroke volume) and speed of the pumps (heart rate) means that there is a large rise in the amount of blood going around the body (cardiac output).

The level at which we can work, the duration at which we can sustain this and ultimately the level at which we can perform is limited by the heart. Training the heart is therefore vital and must form the backbone of any training plan. But what actually are we doing when we train the heart?

As we train the heart through exercising at increased heart rates (compared to normal day to day activities), we increase the amount of blood that is pumped by the heart in one pump – an increase in stroke volume. This means that for a given exercise level it will take a lower number of beats per minute to satisfy the demand for oxygenated blood. So heart rate for that exercise drops. Heart rates are therefore a very useful tool for us to understand how hard we are working.

As you are sitting reading this your body is in a relaxed state (hopefully!) and you are not doing anything strenuous. The demand on the heart is low and the number of beats per minute is quite low – this is known as resting heart rate. Typically a resting heart rate can vary from person to person from between 70 beats per minute down to as little as 29 beats per minute. Generally heart rate is a good guide to fitness levels. As fitness improves resting heart rate drops (for the most part due to a bigger stroke volume). Therefore it is very useful to monitor your resting heart rate over a period of time to see how it changes with training.

Resting heart rate is ideally taken first thing in the morning when relaxed in bed. If you take it once or twice a week you can see how it changes with training over time. It is also a very useful guide to your state of health and an increase in resting heart rate can mean you are in a state of fatigue or over training or are becoming ill. Professional athletes often keep a diary listing resting heart rates to see trends and changes to monitor their conditioning.

Top professional endurance athletes have huge hearts and huge stroke volumes and can have heart rates down to less than 30 beats per minute! Measure your own now – what's your pulse? 60-65 beats per minute? More? As a rough guide anywhere under 70 BPM is 'good', below 60 is very good and below 50 hints at a very impressive heart. A Tour de France

cyclist's heart is beating once every two seconds and is meeting all his demands!

Motocross riders should also aim to lower their resting heart rate and increase their stroke volume. This will allow you to keep up that first lap speed throughout the course of the race without fading. It will also help reduce arm pump and delay its onset as more oxygen is reaching the arm muscles and the lactic acid is being more efficiently dispersed and broken down.

Maximum heart rate is also a good guide to effort levels – this is usually in the range of 190-210 beats per minute. You might think that maximum heart rate increases with fitness training but in fact it may not be altered greatly. It declines gradually with age and is affected by heat and health but it is a very good measure of fitness levels as we can see the percentage of your maximum heart rate (effort level) you need to put into a given exercise and how long you can sustain very high effort levels. Some endurance athletes will perform at close to 95 per cent of their maximum heart rate for prolonged periods.

I have done research into the heart rate levels achieved during a motocross race and the graph is interesting to see – over 180 beats a minute for 35-40 minutes! This is 90 per cent of the rider's maximum effort and just goes to show how hard a motocross race is physically. When we are training we need to know the effort we are putting in so we can train at the most appropriate levels...



Africa, 2006 – his Dakar dream is in tatters but Charley Boorman can still raise a smile

PREACHER MAN!

When it comes to pushing off-road biking to a mainstream audience, author and actor Charley Boorman's already done more than most – and now his Race to Dakar book and DVD looks set to pick up where Long Way Round left off...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos Race to Dakar 2006

A TASTE of the Dakar Rally was served up in the final few months of last year when Charley Boorman's 'Race to Dakar' TV series/documentary aired on Sky. The subsequent book and DVD – formats that served the ex-movie actor of *The Emerald Forest* fame so well when he completed 'Long Way Round' with best mate Ewan McGregor – have since entered the shops and provide the notoriously gruelling race with a mainstream profile as the 2007 event blasts across North West Africa.

DBR went to meet the friendly, talkative and bike-mad 40-year-old at production offices near Clapham Junction to discover more about his Dakar adventure, riding off-road, the Long Way Round and future McGregor/Boorman collaborations...

With 2004's Long Way Round Boorman and McGregor rode from London to New York via Europe, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Russia, Siberia and the USA, covering 20,000 miles in three-and-a-half months on the back of two BMW GS1150s.

The books (paperback, hardback and illustrated) have sold more than one million copies, DVDs (more than 500,000 sold and counting), TV series and repeats are an international success story, the spoils and recognition of which helped Boorman green light his dream attempt at the 2006 Dakar.

The formative parts of the following documentary carries very much the feel of Long Way Round with the same production team in place but there is naturally far more emphasis focussed towards off-road riding. And watching the actor tackle the demands of enduro – drilled by Dakar veteran and '06

team-mate Simon Pavey – means that the discipline has been pushed further towards wider public consciousness than ever before. Boorman spent almost a year gaining the technique, physique and aptitude for the 10,000km two-week sprint including highs (completing the Dawn to Dusk) and lows (breaking his collarbone at his first attempt at dune riding in Dubai).

Ultimately, the BMW-backed rider would last just five days into the rally before a slow speed tumble led to a dislocated left thumb and four broken bones in his right hand. It was a painful – and far too premature – ending...

DBR: What have you been up to since Dakar? Have the hands healed okay?

CB: "Wow, how long do you have? I think I was quite lucky because when most people on the Dakar Rally break a bone or fall out for whatever reason they get pulled away from the whole thing and sent home. I think that can be very demoralising because it is a sign that you have basically failed. I had two broken hands but there were people with much worse – ironically, I was lucky. Due to the documentary I was able to persuade the organisers to include me on the planes with the other journalists and stuff.

"I was totally f*****d when I got back. I had lost a stone-and-a-half and had to sort out my hands. All my tendons and nerve endings had been smashed to pieces. I had dislocated my scaphoid and wrecked the joint so I had a complicated five-hour procedure on my thumb. It has been fused together now so that I can ride a motorbike. I have not been able to do that

much off-road riding because it has taken me five months to get my hands back so that I can properly hold on.

"We then had this massive task of trying to make a seven-part TV show out of everything that we had. It took eight months. At the same time we were still selling Long Way Round to different countries.

DBR: Since 2003 and Long Way Round we assume life has been a bit surreal with one life-changing project after the other...

CB: "I suppose I have a lot to thank Ewan for because we were just going to do the trip by ourselves but I did not have the money. Then someone approached us about a book and that spurred on the TV series as well. With Ewan and his name we managed to get the whole thing done and things changed for me since then.

"From the success of Long Way Round I was able to do Race to Dakar. When it started I did not think that anybody would be interested because it is something I was doing on my own and it was a mad race. The one thing that we did have in our favour was that no-one really knows what goes on in the Dakar Rally. Even people who know about off-road sport don't realise the inner workings of the Dakar. We thought there was a potentially good drama there.

"We revisited the people who helped us with Long Way Round and we were half expecting them to say 'nice idea Charley but if you attach another star to it then we'll do it' so it was a surprise when we had a positive response." ►



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DBR: Essentially your projects have introduced motorcycling to a bigger audience. Does that make you proud?

CB: "Yes, completely. Long Way Round was a good idea. When people stop you in the street because they know the show it is because of their enthusiasm for it and that's really nice. It is amazing the amount of people who have just gone off riding because of it and we hear these excellent stories of how we have changed people's lives. I feel very lucky."

DBR: Did you ride off-road even before Long Way Round?

CB: I rode a lot as a kid even if I was always

the one with the s**t gear and my mate Kaz had the pukka stuff! I then spent time at the BMW school in Wales and learnt a lot there. You do have to go through a process of doing the basics again but I have seen good motocross riders come through the two days and say 'f**k me, didn't know that'.

"Part of it comes from riding the GS1200 and seeing what it can do. The first morning you have to go up this big bank and you are thinking 'there is no way I am going up there with this thing' but you get to grips with it. Doing Long Way Round in all those conditions, those distances and on that monster – that you could not even pick up yourself – you get to a good level of familiarity."

DBR: Have you developed a taste for enduros after the preparation for Race to Dakar?

CB: "It is fun. Going into Dakar I wanted to learn and I think Simon was surprised at how much I could actually do off-road. It meant there was less work technically and more just hard riding. At first Simon really pushed me and the load that I took on was enormous. The learning curve is pretty big when you go off-road, especially with the kind of riding we were doing down in Wales where you just go off through bogs, it was not like we were just bumping around on a track and stopping every 10 laps."

DBR: You were the better rider off-road in Long way Round...

CB: "Well I started riding bikes when I was seven and was doing it off-road until around 14 years old. I was not doing any schoolboy racing but I was crossing rivers, heading through forest lanes and lapping tracks whereas Ewan had a huge learning curve."

DBR: It seems like you felt dwarfed by the enormity of Race to Dakar at times both in terms of the demands on you as a rider but also the centre attraction of the documentary/book...

CB: "It was dramatic. Sometimes you would realise that there was the book, the DVD, the TV show, the sponsors and all the money put in by people like BMW and the support from those like Touratech – it was phenomenal. Everyone was saying 'Charley, it doesn't matter how far you get' when you know that they are thinking 'you'd better do five or six days at least'."

"It didn't matter what people said really because I felt the pressure either way. There was also the extra things like the Dakar

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horror stories people tell and little realisations like you will be on a bike for 17 hours a day only be able to stop to take fuel and have a p**s.

"The first day in Africa was hard but I had a fantastic fourth day. I was relaxed, riding better and the road book was working fine. Day five we started early and I spent a lot of time on my own but I was comfortable and pegging along. I was at about 80 per cent and doing fine until that stupid crash."

DBR: What happened exactly?

CB: "I was going along at something like 12kph along a flat bit of sand and the next thing I knew my face was scraping on the ground. I thought 'f**k, what happened there?' When the front end tucks, normally you can feel it coming. I had just refuelled so the bike was very heavy. It was so unexpected and that was it. The ride back was then a nightmare. I ended up fourth fastest Brit that day which didn't say much for the Brits did it!

"I was still keeping a decent speed but every ripple was sending shockwaves up my arms. I still had some 200 kilometres off-road before reaching Tarmac. I would see cracks in the road and know that a shock of pain was coming. It was awful.

"The book, DVD, BMW and everything was on my mind and I was seeing this lovely deck of cards I had built up starting to fall down. The

next morning I was waiting for the plane to take me onto the next stage and I was on the phone talking to BMW telling them 'we are going to do this and that' and 'the project was still going ahead' when really I was thinking 'what the f**k are we going to do? It's all over...'

"I would like to do Dakar again because I would know that those first five or six days are okay. I think when you first attempt it you use a lot of mental energy by just not knowing what is going on and worrying. I would want to go a bit further."

DBR: The support from BMW for Race to Dakar seemed pretty hefty. They must have been happy after the success of Long Way Round...

CB: "Well they got the first project pretty cheap but then none of us knew how popular Long Way Round would be! We were dealing with KTM and BMW for the trip and kept them on a par, even though KTM were being flaky. I can sit here with my hand on my heart and say that the bikes we had for Long Way Round were the right ones. BMW have

been brilliant and I hope it has been two-way traffic and they have got just as much out of us as we have from them."

DBR: How do you reckon Ewan would have done at the Dakar?

CB: "Ewan is a very determined person. I think he has the right head for it. Had he gone through the same training as me I think he would have done very well."

DBR: Can you tell us about your next adventure?

CB: Long Way Down is something that Ewan and I really want to do and it looks like it is

With team-mate and teacher Si Pavey



© Fergus Greer



going ahead! After doing Long Way Round Ewan and I felt that it would be nice to do another journey. One of the places it seems that everyone wants to go is Africa. We always said that if we did another one then that is where we would go and we have talked about it for the last few years.

"We have started to make some deals and if everything goes well - which it looks like it will at the moment - then we will go off next summer down from John O'Groats to Capetown. Some of the highlights of doing Long Way Round - apart from riding the motorbikes every day - were seeing the kids through Unicef. I think it brought some reality to the documentary and I think we all need to understand that we are lucky where we are and we have a responsibility. Only people can change people."

• *Race to Dakar* is published by Time Warner books and is available now



MEN OF STEEL!

Six lycra-clad superheroes do battle to the bitter end in the sprawling metropolis of Sheffield

Photos by Andrew Ferguson



World champ Adam Raga leads Toni Bou across the barrels – but it's the younger Spaniard who comes out on top

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IF THE Sheffield Indoor Trial were a Marvel or DC Comics production you'd have to assume that Antonio Bou was the hero. For the last two editions in a row – both in 2006 – Beta's uncaped crusader has taken a surprise come-from-behind victory over Gas Gas' cocky Catalan Adam Raga.

But while Bou is certainly worthy of hero status, the only true superhero in the eyes of the Sheffield crowd is Dougie Lampkin. The Yorkshire born and bred Repsol HRC Montesa rider has struggled indoors since moving over to the four-stroke bike he debuted in Sheffield at the start of '05. But almost two years later it seems like Dougie's finally figured out how to get the best from the thumper in the synthetic environment of the Hallam FM Arena.

Breaking free from the tired traditions of the FIM WITC, the qualifying round at Sheffield is run in an all-new and very novel way. Instead of each rider doing all six sections in turn they tackle one each until everyone has ridden them all.

Confused? Probably not as confused as Raga who still hasn't received a full and proper explanation of what's going on from clerk of the course Dave Willoughby before James Dabill cleans section one to the cheers of the 7,000-strong crowd.

As soon as Dabill leaves the end cards to section one, Bou enters then fives section two, Sherco's Albert Cabestany cleans section three before Fujinami does the same in four. A freshly enlightened Raga stays feet-up over the logs in section five prior to Lampkin cleaning six – then they all move on a section.

Of all the opening lap's hazards it's the log cabin in section two that's the toughest. As well as collecting a maximum from Bou it claims fives from both Dabill and Cabestany, single dabs plus time for Lampkin and Raga while Fujinami loses a single mark on time but stays feet-up. ▀

sheffield trial



Definitely worth one!



Bou was a surprise Sheffield winner in January and he makes it two wins in '06

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And the two marks Dougie loses there are in fact the only ones he drops during the whole lap. By the time everyone's attempted everything and Dabill, Dougie and Fujigas have won their head-to-head races against Bou, Cabestany and Raga, Lampkin's in front by two marks ahead of Fujinami and Raga who are tied in second.

The second and final lap reverts to a more traditional way of doing things – kind of. While the riders will attempt each section in turn, in the reverse order of the opening lap's result, the scores aren't zeroed and all six riders return to do battle.

After another round of dual-lane races won by Bou, Cabestany and Lampkin it's Dabill who's last on the leaderboard so first to attempt section one which the Leeds-based Beta rider convincingly cleans. And with the exception of a frustrated Fujigas who fives, everyone follows suit. But section two's not so easy. ▶



With just a few sections to go Dougie Lampkin's looking good for the win – then it all goes Pete Tong



Raga ends the evening second



Sherco's Albert Cabestany loses touch with the leaders on the second lap

Fujigas is gifted third at the death



James Dabill struggles to make his mark

Fives for Dabill, Bou, Cabestany and Fujigas – who actually takes three dabs plus two on time – are followed by a single dab plus two on time for Raga. Lampkin manages to stay clean over the cabin itself and just as it looks like he's gonna stay clean and increase his already convincing lead he falls within sight of the end cards – d'oh!

There's not much in it for the big contenders over the next few sections – Dabill's on a five streak, Bou's starting to come alive while Raga, Lampkin and Fujigas are pretty much evenly matched in the sections but Dougie's sitting pretty out front mostly due to his awesomely low first lap score. But then it all goes Pete Tong! Dougie fives on the logs and rocks of section six, the skips in seven and finally fives the waterfall to blow any chance he has of winning.

And during those same sections Bou – who's riding out of his skin – sneaks into the lead by simply out-performing the rest in an awesome display of poise, balance and skill. Raga slots into second, Lampkin's still third – but a long way behind – while Fujigas and Cabestany battle it out for fourth with only the races left to run.

If Dougie thinks things have gone badly up until now he's about to learn that things, no matter how bad they already are, can sometimes get worse – much worse! With the final podium spot pretty much in the bag all Dougie has to do is follow his team-mate home across the line but a broken footpeg causes Lampkin to have a massive crash and add a further five points to his score which places him one point behind Fujinami.

"I'm absolutely gutted," says Dougie. "I just can't get my head around how I've ended up fourth when I was leading with just three sections left to ride. I really felt good out there and the way things were going I really thought it could have been my night but that proved not to be the case. One minute Adam and I are battling for the victory the next thing we are handing it to Bou."

But Dougie's comment about the man who'll be joining him for '07 on the HRC Montesa squad is perhaps a little unfair seeing as Bou's ridden a killer second lap which sees him finish six marks clear of runner-up Raga – and it would even have been seven if Adam hadn't edged him out in their final race!

results

Sheffield Indoor Trial

1	Antonio Bou	(E – Beta)	6+7=13
2	Adam Raga	(E – Gas Gas)	4+13=17
3	Takahisa Fujinami	(J – HRC Montesa)	4+23=27
4	Dougie Lampkin	(GB – HRC Montesa)	2+26=28
5	Albert Cabestany	(E – Sherco)	6+23=29
6	James Dabill	(GB – TTT Beta)	10+41=51





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RAGE ROCKS OUT WITH THE HANSON CREW AT TONYMOTO

Words by Chris Crayford Photos by still-mx.co.uk

The Hanson Racing team has been on the youth scene for a few years now and is run by ex-British champion Greg Hanson. Greg utilises his own personal experiences (he was young once, believe it or not) and textbook riding style to bring out the best in each of his riders.

But it doesn't stop at the racing. Riders are also taught to deal with the pressures that come with the sport and how to put in the work off the bike as well as on it – something that's crucial if you want to succeed in motocross.

Rage got a chance to grab a few words with the man himself while he and the team practised at Tonymoto – here's what he had to say...

Rage: Hey Greg, thanks for taking some time out to speak to us. So how long has Hanson Racing been running now?

GH: "The team started out in 2003 with six riders all racing at club level. It wasn't until '04 that we went to the Nationals."

Rage: What levels of rider are you running out of your awning?

GH: "We run riders from club level, to schoolboy national, to British U21s. Maximising the potential is what Hanson Racing's all about. We don't take on champions – with support and guidance we work towards making them champions."

Rage: What qualities do you look for – and look to bring out – in the Hanson Racing team riders?

GH: "The qualities I look for you can't see straight away – riders will normally spend some time with the team before any decisions are made. Riders have to be dedicated, disciplined,

determined, be willing to learn and have a 'never quit' mentality.

"All riders have strengths and weaknesses, it's my job to cement their strengths and work on their weaknesses to make them the complete package. The relationship between the rider and his or her parents as well as between me and the parents is also a key factor."

Rage: You must have a few different characters within the team. How hard is it to relate to all of them while trying to keep everyone happy?

GH: "To say we have some personalities in the team would be an understatement! But it's one of the most enjoyable parts of the job – something I pride myself on is my ability to relate to and gain the respect of my riders. If I could only deal with a certain type of person I wouldn't be able to do my job."



Rage: How does the team aspect of Hanson Racing help the riders?

GH: "The team allows everyone to support one another and introduces amateur riders into a professional environment. There's a lot more to what we do other than riding – it's about building relationships with the riders and their parents, it's about making sure they put the work in down the gym and it's about having fun. Each factor is as important as the next and is made more enjoyable when working in a team, not to mention giving it that competitive edge."

Rage: Everyone knows that fitness is a major part of motocross – are the riders expected to train during the week as well as ride?

GH: "Yeah, for sure. If you want to ride to the best of your ability you have to be fit enough to do so but that doesn't mean they should be training flat-out every day of the week."

"Different training regimes work for different people. Take Ricky Carmichael for example, his way was to train as hard as he could and it worked for him but that's not to mean it would work for his competitors. I know we're talking about the best riders in the world here but the basic principles still apply. No-one should be training because they have to – they should be training because they want to, which is vital."

Rage: What's been the highlight of the Hanson Racing team so far?

GH: "It's got to be Alfie Smith winning the BYMX championship in '04 in only his first season with the team. The partnership worked really well and the results speak for themselves."

Rage: What would you say is the best part of your job?

GH: "Working with the youngsters is an inspiration, not to mention a challenge! Training and riding with the lads is great fun and at the end of the day that's what it's all about."

"Of course there's a serious side to what we do – there has to be – but if you're not having fun then you shouldn't be involved in the sport. The satisfaction of seeing all the hard work pay off when the lads are out riding is like nothing else, it gives you a great sense of achievement."

Rage: What championships are your riders entered in for '07?

GH: "We'll have riders entered in the BYMX Nationals and Brit U21s. We'll also be doing selected Maxxis rounds for the U21 riders – it's a good opportunity for the lads to gain some valuable experience riding against the best."

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MAX ATTACK!

Max Anstie e-mailed the Rage office recently to let us know what he's up to and it seems the ever mobile 13-year-old is currently in the States and kicking some American ass. Max messaged us from California where he was racing the Brett Downey Memorial at Perris Raceway in the 85cc 12-13, 85cc Open and also the Supermini division which caters for big-wheel bikes up to 112cc. We'll leave it up to Max to fill you in on what went down...

"I got out there in practice and felt great – I was the only rider doing the 90-foot double on an 85cc bike. Because I was running three classes I had six motos on day one and three the following day.

"On day one in the 85cc 12-13 class I got a good start in moto one but overshot the first turn a little and dropped back to second but got the lead within a few laps and stayed there. I got the holeshot in moto two and just pulled away.

"The Supermini race was tougher. I got second off the start behind 15-year-old Christian Craig but couldn't catch him and stayed second – moto two went the same way.

"My third class of the day was the 85cc Open division. Christian and I had a good battle but he just got the better of me in moto one then in moto two I got the holeshot and tried to hold Christian off but he slipped through. I tried as hard as I could to hang on to him but he

gradually pulled a gap.

"That night it rained and the track was like a quagmire for day two. The track was too wet to run practice so they cancelled it and ran straight into the races.

"In the 12-13 class I got a great start. All European riders are normally better than the Americans in the wet because in Europe it always rains. I put my mud riding skills to full use and won by almost a lap.

"In the Supermini class I got out of the start right behind Christian and even though we battled it out to the end he got the better of me.

"My last race of the weekend was in the 85cc Open. Christian and I battled again but this time he crashed with two laps to go. He took a long time to get up and I won.

"Overall it was a great weekend. Last Easter most of the guys that were at this race could beat me but now I can beat them so all my training is paying off. I'd like to thank my school – Park House School and Sports College – and teachers for supporting me and giving me the work I need so I can keep up with the rest of the class."

Max Anstie's living it up in the US of A



COMMENT

Rain! Rain! Rain! Will the damn stuff ever stop? And if it's not raining it's too damn windy to get much riding done! With spring – and the new-season – just around the corner things can only get better and we can't wait!

The 2007 youth motocross season should be awesome with no less than four national championships in each class to be claimed. And as well as a battle of the riders it's also gonna be a scrap of the powerplants and it's gonna be interesting to see how those Honda 150cc four-poppers go on against the two-stroke 85s in both the small and big-wheel divisions.

We're gonna be at as many events as possible in '07 – both club and national – and also motocross, trials and enduro. If there's an event you think we should be at then let us know by dropping us an email to rage@dirtbikerider.co.uk

And we also want you to keep on sending your details and pics for MX Top Trumps and the Ride MX Happy Snappers competition too.

PAUL COATES



AGE: 12
BIKE: KTM 85cc
YEARS RACING: 6
KIT: FOX
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: OVER 150
TITLES: 2
BROKEN BONES: NONE, TOUCH WOOD
TRUCK/VAN: AUCKLAND RACE TRUX

JOSH WILDE



AGE: 11
BIKE: HONDA
YEARS RACING: 8 MONTHS
KIT: THOR AND FOX
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 8
TITLES: 0
BROKEN BONES: 0
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Paul Neale wins a training day with Robbie Herring

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ALPINE STAR!

BILLY MAKES LIKE A VON TRAPP AS HE SEES IN THE NEW YEAR HIGH IN THE AUSTRIAN ALPS



HOW MANY times has someone said 'Happy New Year' to you? It kinda wears off after January 5th. I think there should be a rule about it, no festivities after January 5th. Just call me Scrooge MacKenzie!

Christmas is all good when you're growing up, when you're young and Santa still brings you what you want. But as soon as you're over 19 he starts to concentrate on the little kids again and all us older kids get landed with the crap and dodgy garments that fall off the little elves' worktops!

For instance, I asked for Lego Technic this year – a really cool truck with loads of moving parts. I saw it in Toys R Us and immediately scribbled it down on my Christmas list along with a few other little things and sent it to the North Pole. Christmas Day arrived and I ran into the living room at 5am and started tearing open all my lovely, well wrapped Christmas prezzies – but I didn't find my big truck. Instead Santa had obviously been watching me touring the

on the nearest padded seats – I could sleep on a clothesline I tell thee!

Anyways, Ryanair was obviously still hungover and no-one even turned up for the flight so all Ryanair flights were cancelled! Irish, I tell ya! So we had to hop on another flight to Austria but we made it there in the end. It's the first time I have skied since I was 14 when I wore a luminous orange Timberland jumper on our school ski trip! Chavtastic!

This time I was more prepared and got myself some really cool tartan salopettes and was rocking the slopes! Smith sent me through some sexy goggles too. I picked it up pretty quickly and had a total blast. We stayed out there for New Year and watched a massive fireworks display in the mountains – it was wicked hearing the bang echo right through the Alps. Not what I'm normally used to for New Year but it was a wicked experience.

Now I'm home it's back to training and riding and



Yesh, Billy looksh very sherious

races, getting lost, getting speeding tickets and realised I needed a sat nav for my camper. Good one Santa! I didn't bloody ask for a sat nav though, did I? I wanted a fricking Lego truck. So I started screaming and shouting and stamping my feet then ran off and cried in my room...

One good thing about Christmas is Christmas dinner! My dad cooks up a storm every time and we are still eating the leftovers a week later. Christmas dinner should be made compulsory once a week – I love the wee kilned sausages (WTF are kilned sausages Billy – SL?)! Amazing!

Anyways, after Christmas dinner I was on the road heading to Stansted at 10pm. My girlfriend and her family invited me to go skiing – something that has been planned for years but I can never seem to make so this year I was there! What luxury driving on Chrimbo day, I got to Stansted in four hours and I wasn't even trying to go fast.

I arrived at 2am (which if you are any good at maths I guess you'll have realised by now) but was totally knackered. The flight wasn't until 7am and because I had made it down so early I shacked up

something I've been excited about for ages now – and that's jumping on that Kawasaki! As soon as I got back from skiing I was on a plane to Japan for a few days testing and we tested hundreds of parts then came home as quick as that! The Japanese are so efficient it's unreal! The bike was being stripped and re-built in 20 minutes, then I was back out on the track! The bike is unbelievable though, I can't wait to start racing it.

I've done loads of interviews recently and it's mostly talking about the bike and team so I'll try to keep off that topic as much as possible. By the time you read this I will be in Belgium – it's the start of bike training so I'm going over for some hardcore sand riding. It's a really hard two weeks, basically riding every day. It should be good though – we have five of us going over there. My two new Twisted 7 team-mates Bry and Lawson, Johnny Hamilton and spannerman BC! So there should be some good banter going on to keep us sane after all the riding!

BD 11

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